Rising Wave of Social Media:
A Perspective of Political Awareness, Voting Behavior, Online and Offline Political Participation of University Students in Pakistan

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Vom Fachbereich Germanistik und Kunstwissenschaften der

Philipps-Universität Marburg als Dissertation angenommen am: _18.02.2021_

Tag der mündlichen Prüfung/Disputation am: 27.05.2021

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Acknowledgments

There are many people to thank for escorting me through my project and getting me out of difficult times. Foremost, I want to thank my Supervisor Prof.Angela Krewani for her guidance, support, faith, and trust. During the conversation with her, I learned what 'research freedom' really means and learned to explore new ideas. One of her sentences always put a lot of energy and enthusiasm in me and that is 'I am happy you are doing good'. Her unyielding confidence was truly a terrifying motivator. She not only guided me academically, but her emotional support in other matters has been incredible. Somehow, it was due to her that I could settle in Germany for the duration of my studies.

I am immensely grateful to my Co-supervisor Prof. Yvonne Zimmermann for her insightful comments, collaboration, and guidance. Her extraordinary mentorship along with her valuable suggestions enabled me to refine my work and making my dissertation more presentable.

I also want to thank my colleague Sophie G. Einwächter, for evoking my passion and inquisitive mind in a discussion on research questions. Though I did not meet her many times, she guided me in my early days of studies, which was very encouraging for me. Also in need of thanks is my colleague Dr. Wajid Tahir who has been instrumental in shaping my thinking about an empirical part of the project. He has always been there for listening to me and giving input where possible and whenever I needed it. Very sincere thanks to my colleague Mr. Rehan Tariq who helped me in recruiting the student participants to fill the survey questionnaire and also helped me in administrative matters of my home university.

My parents, Aurangzeb and Rashida Zeb, thank you for your incessant love, support, patience, and prayers, especially my mother who spent days and nights with my children in Pakistan throughout the tenure of my project. This was because of her that I could pursue my studies in Germany. She has been a constant support and peace of mind for me.

A special thanks to a very special and loving person in my life, my husband, Muhammad Ajmal Adil, who has always been standing by my side and providing me support and encouragement saying that one day I will do it and the hard time will be over. My loving thanks to my children Rameen, Sharmeen, Yashfeen, and Zain Sabtain, for missing the whole family together during my studies. They never complained about the birthdays, anniversaries, parent-teacher meetings at school, Eid celebrations, and many other such occasions, to which, as a mother, I could not participate.

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Introduction

In the past two decades, mediated communication has passed through revolutionary stages. It has impacted today's society as never before. Media actively play an intermediary role between institutions of the society and members of the society and in this way try to influence the social and political processes in any society by shaping social and political views. Media is a critical agent of socialization too and it should keep the two-way process of communication smooth. It should act as a linking bridge between the audiences, the government and non-government organizations.

Mainstream news media, not only in non-democratic regimes but in established democracies, is facing many challenges in today's high choice media environment (Van Aelst et al., 2017). Starting from print media and moving to electronic media, the dominance of television for a long time and now the emergence of digital media; every new form of media offered a changing and quite different nature of communication (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012). Much contemporary scholarly debate focuses on the contribution of public discourse through these new and old forms of communication media in developing their political self and the implications of political communication on democratic consequences.

However, on the bases of the difference between private interests; on which mainstream media works, and the public interest, the debate starts about the influences of business models of mainstream media and how they work globally, and ends at seeking alternatives which set agenda for public service and participate in developing democratic public sphere. Furthermore, the debate over influences on mainstream media raises many other concerns regarding quality and the diversity of news due to the concentration of mainstream media ownership, profit orientation and its impact on independence of news organizations (McChesney, Robert W. and Schiller, 2003; McChesney, 2008). If media is set free and independent of outer influences and pressures, it can better be utilized for changes in any society. Scholarships from emerging democracies suggest free and independent communication media as one of the pre-requisites for governing post-conflict societies and fair and free electoral process (LaMay, 2004). This is how the challenges faced by mainstream media have given space to the potentials of new information and communication media to challenge established structures and status quo (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012).

Proponents of the democratic role of mainstream media welcome the new opportunities, emerged by internet, to initiate public service and contribute to its democratic consequences (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2).

The development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and its widespread adoption have brought about remarkable changes in todays' societies (Castells, 2001, 2007). The selective nature of Web 1.0 technology allowed retrieving information to those users who were already interested in seeking information on civic and political matters (Bimber & Davis, 2003). However, web 2.0 technologies are characterized by interactivity. In previous years, gradual increase in internet use was observed and evidence confirms that the Internet has become part of everyday life. According to worldwide statistics, only 495 million people accessed the internet in 2001 while this figure accounted 2749 million for 2013, by May 2015 internet users throughout the world reached 3.18 billion, 3.42 billion in July 2016, and this figure reached to 4.92 billion in Sep. 2020 (www.internetwolrdstats.com[1]; ITU[2]).

Social media, a product of Web 2.0 technology, offers many versatile and innovative ways to its users to express themselves. The flexibility of the social media user for being publisher, distributor and consumer at the same time has made social media more popular. This flexibility is provided by Web 2.0 technologies featured by interactivity, which facilitates social media users to consume and produce the content of their choice. Whether it is about passive online expression such as casually liking and sharing social media content or active online expression such as commenting, discussing, getting into political controversies online, evaluating, reading and referring blogs, both encourage various levels/ forms of civic and political engagement (Gil De Zúñiga et al., 2009; C. Vaccari et al., 2015). Enhancing the analysis to social media uses, rapid increase in the use of social media not only in teens and youngsters but also in other age groups has also been observed. This phenomenon did not take place only in one area of the world but the whole world is observing rapid growth in internet use.

Now social media has adopted the shape of a big avenue which is a lot more than just making profiles and mere building friendships. As far as the informational aspect of using social

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[1] www.Internetworldstats.com is a website which collects data from 246 countries about internet, social media, population and market research data.

[2] ITU stands for International Telecommunication Union, is a United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies

media is concerned, there has been broader research trends towards common uses such as information seeking (K. S. Kim et al., 2013), education, discuss educational topics, class assignments (Abbas et al., 2019; Ansari & Khan, 2020; Bernard & Dzandza, 2018; Hung & Yuen, 2010; Mahdiuon et al., 2020; Tariq et al., 2012; Zachos et al., 2018), social and the political awareness (Boulianne, 2015, 2016; Nazir & Bhatti, 2016), environmental awareness (Rahim & Jalal adeen, 2016), and their use as a social capital ((Burgess et al., 2017; Jose van Dijck, 2013; N. Lin, 2005).

Furthermore, political parties and political figures have been using social media to access their voters and running political campaigns (Tasenţe & Nicoleta, 2013). Social media is now a more popular platform for bringing sustainable change in the political environment of any country, whether it is about the mobilization of political protest in Spain[3] through social networks (Anduiza et al., 2014) or in the case of the Arab spring movement (Breuer, 2012; Breuer et al., 2015) which started in 2010 from Tunisia. The movement spread throughout the country, stimulated by computer-literate working-class youths alongwith their supporters among middle-class college students. According to a survey, nine out of ten Syrian and Tunisian responded that they used Facebook to participate, organize these protests, and spread awareness (Protest movements will be discussed in detail in chapter 8) (Boulianne, 2015; Breuer, 2012; Breuer et al., 2015).

In proceeding democratic political environment, the role of social media in highlighting certain national issues such as scandals of political leaders regarding corruption, moral incapability, political and economic instability, anxiety, unemployment, dissatisfaction, government failure, unfulfilled expectation, and the disabilities of political leaders to address these issues are among public discourse on social media (Breuer et al., 2012; H. Lee, 2013). Furthermore, economic challenges handled and covered by the favorite political party, lifestyles, and daily activities of their favorite political leader especially during election days have also been part of social media routine discussions (Ghauri, 2018; Express tribune Blogs; Daily Pakistan Blogs).

The statistics collected in different years provide evidence to support this phenomenon. Moreover, according to the global statistics collected by these organizations, 84 % (4.14 billion)

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[3] Also called 15-M movement, a series of protests and demonstrations were started on 15 May around local election against government's austerity policies, regarded as a youth-centered movement steered by social media communication.

of adult online users use social media (www.internetwolrdstats.com; Statista.com[4], 2020; datareportal.com, 2020). Further, more than 87% of all online users of the age group 18-29 are on facebook (statista.com, socialmediatoday.com, 2018).

In this speedily changing, technologically advancing, and globally interconnected world, the corridors for the younger generation which are open now have never been earlier. Internet and communication technologies not only have expanded youth's number of activities but also extended the number of ways how these activities are performed. Making unique profiles on social media, the formation of identity, and the presentation of self are the most favorite activities of the youngsters (Davis, 2014)**.**

Over the last decade, social media have gained much growth and fame worldwide. Due to its unstopped popularity, many scholars have turned the focus of their studies from the uses of social media for capital building among different community members such as teenagers[5] (Lenhart et al., 2010) and among youth (Khurana, 2015; Wong et al., 2014) to the factors which motivate them to use these platform for civic and political participation (T. Ahmad et al., 2019; Loader et al., 2014). Moreover, the youngsters are making potential use of social media platforms like Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter for information and news updates (Bukhari et al., 2018; Hamid et al., 2016; K. S. Kim et al., 2013; Mitchell et al., 2016), increased political interest and political participation (Cantijoch et al., 2013).

The youth of Pakistan is also influenced by the recent rising wave of social media. The data gathered from Internetworldstats and Business Recorder Pakistan about internet users in Pakistan in the third quarter of 2020, the internet users in Pakistan are 76 million and the active social media users in Pakistan are over 39.4 million (+7% annual increase). Among all social media, facebook is regarded as the most famous and growing website among the age group of 18-24 all over the world (Karamat & Farooq, 2016; Smuts, 2010). In Pakistan among all internet users, over 92% are Facebook users. Young people are in majority of the users who use social media.

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[4] Statista.com is an online statistics portal. Founded in 2007, collects statistics and data from market and opinion research institutions worldwide, its headquarter is in NY, United States.

[5] (Lenhart et al., 2010). Social Media & Mobile Internet use Among Teens and Young Adults. A PEW Research Center project. Available at www.pew.org

Social Media Sites	No.of users
Facebook	39 million
Twitter	3.5 million
Instagram	6.7 million
Pinterest	4 million

Statistics issues by www.stata.com, www.datareportal.com, October 2020

The increasing popularity of social media and youngsters' substantial dependency on social media platforms like facebook and twitter for political updates and communication have triggered the interest of many researchers to study this phenomenon in different political setups and countries and regarding youngsters of different cultural and social backgrounds (Gilman & Stokes, 2014; Osa & Corduneanu-Huci, 2003; Stieglitz et al., 2012; Zaheer, 2016).

This study is designed to investigate the phenomenon of political communication through facebook and twitter and its effects on youngsters' political mobilization in the context of the political and social setup of Pakistan. Somehow, the data collected from different websites containing surveys of social media users and voter's electoral trends and their political participation provided some indications about these observed phenomena and a strong base to address this research and to test the theoretical proposition. Moreover, the below mentioned comparative data about three consecutive general elections (2008, 2013, and 2018) in Pakistan indicates the dominant percentage of youth participation in the electoral process in each of the next following elections. The following data is summarized from news websites Express Tribune, Dawn.com, and Dailypakistan.com.

No. of Voters	Election 2008	Election 2013	Election 2018
Registered Voters	Over 80 million	Over 86 million	106 million
Voters Polled	35 Million	Over 46 million	Over 54.3 million
Young Voters	Less than 10 million	Over 40 million	Over 46 million
First time Voters	-----	Over 6 million	Over 20 million

'Why I selected this topic' carries a lot of reasons. The democratization of communication and inclusion of citizens are the pre-requisite for the democratic political process (Dahl, 1989). I want to test this phenomenon according to the requirements of the democracy described in Dahl's Theory of Democracy i.e. the enlightened understanding of the issues, equality in voting, and the equal participation of all citizens in political decision making. A plethora of studies concluded that political expression through social media cannot be halted even in authoritarian regimes; however, the implications of this phenomenon become more evident in democratic political systems which give more space to deliberative public discourse (Burch, 2014).

Second, the subject of political communication and its ramification in changing media environment got hype in recent times because the public's political discourse in new media environment encourages the involvement of citizens in the deliberative political process (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012). Social networking sites, blogs, and microblogging networks have emerged as platforms where deliberative public discourse takes place and public opinion is formed freely and independently.

Third, youth is a very enthusiastic, vigilant, and challenging age group that is more susceptible to bring any change. Many studies concluded that the effects of the political use of social media can be more visible on youngsters because they tend to play an active role in politics (Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2018, 2019; H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016). The role of social media is important not only in creating youth's political well-being but to translate their political well-being into their online and real-life political participation, so that the effects can be seen in the national democratic political process of the country. Moreover, the democratic role of youth for strengthening political structure is very important especially for struggling democracies like Pakistan. Nevertheless, under the conditions of changing the media environment and its implication for youth's political engagement, it is very important to measure the implications of changing-media environment on youth users of social media in Pakistan in particular reference to the political setup of Pakistan. Therefore, on par with the aforementioned background, the question of 'how and to what extent social media facilitates political communication and political mobilization of youngsters' should be empirically tested in the socio-political context of Pakistan. This is what the following study does.

The following research questions have been designed for the current study:

Main Research Question

1.   Is the intensity of political use of social media among university students in Pakistan associated with the political Mobilization of the university students in Pakistan?

Sub Research Questions

1.1.   Does the political expression on social media provide political awareness to university students (Interest, Information and Knowledge, discussion)?

1.2.   Does the political expression on social media change the traditional voting behavior of university students?

1.3.   Does the political expression on social media facilitate university students' engagement in online and offline political activities?

1.4.   Is there any significant difference in the level of engagement in online and offline activities?

These research questions have been investigated mainly with the support of Habermas's (1969) concept of the public sphere and Dahl's (1989) theory of democracy. Habermas discusses the ideal notion of the public sphere as a place where private people gather to discuss public issues freely and without state pressures (Jürgen Habermas, 1996). According to him, public spheres should have the principle foundation of open discussion on any issue and the right to participate freely. Dahl, in his theory of democracy, explains three substantial elements that are required for democratic norms to prevail. These are an enlightened understanding of politics, equality in voting, and equal and effective participation of all citizens in the political process. Moreover, he also stresses the inclusion of all citizens in the democratic process. In the light of these theories, several challenges that have been faced by democracy in Pakistan, and their empirical investigation in the presence of social media, are discussed in their respective chapters. The data is collected through a quantitative research method by collecting surveys from 750 university students, both male and female of the age group 18-25, from all four provinces of Pakistan. The data is analyzed through multiple regression analysis and the findings are presented in each respective chapter. The rationale behind selecting university students is that university students are more likely to use social media (facebook and twitter) for their political orientation as compared to other age groups. The effects of the political use of social media will

be more visible on university students. Moreover, for practical reasons, it was difficult to reach other youth segments to conduct the study (i) because of their varying and indefinite daily schedule and (ii) because of the time and financial limitation.

This study is going to contribute in this field in many dimensions.

The major contribution of this study is that it encompasses the students from all four provinces of Pakistan, which has not been studied yet in any study as a combination. Very few Pakistani studies focused on a very small scale population segments i.e. limited to a city, a district, a constituency, one university, or one province (M. Ahmed, 2008; Durre-E-Shawar & Asim, 2012; Javaid & Elahi, 2014; Karamat & Farooq, 2016; Zaheer, 2016). The study findings present the differences in the students of all four provinces of Pakistan on the base of their social media usage patterns, the differences in their political awareness level, the differences in their voting behavior, and the differences in their online and offline political participation.

This study alsol presents the findings on the basis of the difference in male and female students' social media usage patterns, the differences on the basis of their political awareness level, their voting behavior, and their online and offline political participation. Further, the comparisons of male and female students in relation to their provinces will also be given.

Another contribution of the study is that this study explains the findings on the basis of the students from different study disciplines i.e. social science students and physical science students. The study will present the difference in the students of social science and physical science on the basis of social media usage patterns, the differences on the base of their political awareness level, their voting behavior, and their online and offline political participation.

In the following part, a brief introduction of every chapter is given.

Chapter one to three will comprise the conceptual and theoretical part of this study. Chapter one will provide snapshop of facebook and twitter, which will cover a comprehensive discussion about political uses of facebook and twitter. This chapter will also give an overview of the uses of these forums by political candidates and parties. The notion of social media as todays' public sphere will be discussed by comparing its characteristics with Habermas's notion of ideal public sphere in chapter two. Chapter three will contain the overview of political scenario in Pakistan i.e. orientation of national-level political parties, elections and the

relationship of media with different political parties. In Chapter 4, the explanation of methods and material adapted to undertake the empirical part of this study will be discussed.

In chapter 5, it is hypothesized that university students' political expression on social media helps enhancing the level of their political interest, 'information and knowledge', and political discussions. Youth's political mobilization explains different reasons that how people get political information of their interest, why people choose to take certain action upon political information, what motivates them to take some action, and how their decisions, upon the reception of information, are shaped. Nevertheless, this chapter tries to untangle the complex relationship of social media use and political knowledge, learning, and awareness from psychological and social considerations. As far as the political use of social media is concerned, it is claimed that youngsters social media use for seeking political information based on their interest is for political well-being of their inner and outer self, exchanging and discussing political information and for getting informed politically (R. Ali & Fatima, 2016; Amer, 2009; Khalifa, 2011). Data is collected from students through a structured questionnaire and the results are analyzed and presented computing multiple linear regression analysis. Findings demonstrate that political expression on social media enhances students' awareness level by creating students' interest in politics, engaging them in political discussions, and providing information and knowledge to students. Various studies suggest that on social media platforms, the citizens themselves are more active in discussing civic and political discourse and contributing to enhancing the level of their political awareness. (Bode et al., 2014). However, the variations on the basis of students' gender, study discipline, and province have been observed in this study. Jarrar & Hammud (2018) also studied political awareness of Jordanian youth and Muzaffar (2019) studied Pakistani youth and found the same results on the basis of gender and academic discipline. Alami (2017) explored the relationship between social media use and political information and knowledge, Karamat & Farooq (2016) explored social media use and political awareness and both studies found a positive association between them. However, the findings of S. Lee & Xenos, (2020) do not support my findings, probably because they measured the relationship of factual knowledge with social media use and the implications of factual knowledge may differ from that of perceived knowledge.

In chapter 6, it is hypothesized that social media political expression is changing the traditional voting behaviors of university students in Pakistan. A lot of studies throughout the

world have focused on political communication during elections to evaluate the effects of social media communication on electoral behavior i.e. voting turnout. Nevertheless,, this phenomenon has not yet been effectively tested considering sociological influences on voting behaviors of youth electorates in Pakistan. The comprehensive conceptual framework of the voting behavior of electorates based on (i) Sociological Model from the publications 'The People's Choice' by Lazarsfeld et al. (1944), 'Voting' by Berelson et al. (1954) and 'Personal Influence' by Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955) and (ii) voting as a prerequisite of democracy from Dahl (1989)' 'Theory of Democracy', is discussed. It is predicted that individual voter's voting decision is influenced by many traditional pressures in local and national level politics in Pakistan such as the candidate itself, caste/ biradri, ties to clan, pressures of feudal setups and family and friends (Akhtar, 2012; Bond et al., 2012, 2017; DiGrazia et al., 2013; Haider, 2017; J. J. Jones et al., 2017; Markoff, 2012; Rais, 1985). Data is collected from students through structured questionnaire and the results are analyzed and presented computing multiple linear regression analysis. Findings demonstrate that political expression on social media has a positive but medium association with the change in traditional voting behavior. Family pressures are affecting more as compared to caste/biradri and friends' influences which endorses the findings of (André Blais et al., 2019). Moreover, the study also revealed that female students accept family pressures on voting decisions more than male students. In the past and also recently many studies found strong influences of these determinants on the voting behavior of urban and non-urban voters (A. Ahmed, 2014; Amil Ahmed et al., 2010; Haider, 2017; Wildar, 1999; Ziring, 2000, mentioned in Akhtar, 2012).

Moreover, in chapters 7 and 8, it is hypothesized that the political expression on social media encourages participation in online and offline political activities respectively, in university students in Pakistan. Theoretical bases of this phenomenon are prepared with Habermas's (1969) concept of the public sphere and Dahl's (1989) theory of democracy. Both assert that the inclusion of people in the national political process is substantial for democracy. Further, the important component of Dahl's theory of democratic process is the effective political participation of all citizens to influence the decision-making process of the country. The political role of social media has become a well-defined and concrete topic of research to investigate the relationship between political expression and participation. This includes conventional political participation such as donating money to a political campaign, canvassing, attending meetings of

political parties, electoral rallies, discussions about merits and demerits of political parties, and online political participation such as online canvassing, donating money, inviting to attend political meetings, sharing slogans, texts, pictures, etc. The youth of Pakistan is also adapting and making use of new technologies for different purposes in various ways. Social media has also changed the patterns of political activities. For political activities, social media seems to be a complete world to its users as most of the political activities are equally been performed online on these platforms, even in a better way. Data is collected from students through a structured questionnaire and the results are analyzed and presented computing multiple linear regression analysis. Findings demonstrate that political expression on social media has a positive and strong association with online political activities and low to medium association with offline political activities. Female students exhibited a low level of participation in offline (real-life) political activities, which is also supported by Zaheer (2016). Conclusion based upon many studies demonstrates that social media platforms have triggered and encouraged those who already were disengaged and feeling uncomfortable participating in offline political activities (Eijaz, 2013; Teresi, 2012). The findings of Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014), Valenzuela et al. (2012, 2014), Zaheer (2016), and many other studies endorse the results of my studies.

In Pakistan, political parties such as Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), and many others have their own official facebook pages and twitter accounts. The media cells of these political parties carry proper official structure and are busy creating and spreading the number of political posts on daily basis. Their aim is to mobilize people and to motivate them to participate in the political process (Atif Rauf, head of Pakistan Muslim League-N's social media team[6], themedieline.org, 2018). They have been successful in attracting their youth supporters more among all; this is particularly because youth is already prone to use these new technologies and has been disengaged from politics previously. However, concerning emerging debate, I found this phenomenon also, worthy of investigation considering the political use of social media by Pakistani youth and their participation in online and offline political activities.

Chapter five to chapter eight is composed of the findings and the discussions on relevant findings. Chapter nine presents the conclusion of the study. The following chapter discusses the

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[6] Article can be accessed from https://themedialine.org/news/the-new-face-of-social-media-driven-elections-in-pakistan/

emergence and the general use of social media, social media in Pakistan, the political use of social media with special emphasis on youth's participatory behaviors, and political expression on social media.

Chapter 1. Social Media and Nature of Social Media Communication

1.1 Introduction

Early scholarly discussion on mediated communication encompasses the role of mainstream media and its democratic consequences on the communication process. In the past two decades, mediated communication has passed through evolutionary stages. Media actively plays an intermediary role between institutions of the society and members of the society and in this way try to dominate the social and political processes in any society by shaping social and political views. The debate over mainstream media questions over quality and diversity of news due to the concentration of mainstream media ownership, profit orientation, and its impact on the independence of news organizations, however, emphasize free and independent media (McChesney, 2008). Scholarship from emerging democracies suggests that one of the pre-requisites for governing post-conflict societies and fair and free electoral process is free and independent communication media (LaMay, 2004). Further, Graber et al. (2008) describe that a healthy democratic process depends upon the working of journalism as an institution of public life. Moving ahead, much contemporary scholarly debate focuses on the contribution of public discourse through these new and old forms of communication media in developing their political self and implications of political communication on democratic consequences.

Even though, mainstream media is regarded as the major news source for politics and current affairs (Mitchell et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2016, Reuters Institute Digital News Report[7] 2016) its limitations, as state-controlled and as commercial media can not be ignored. However, it gives space to the potentials of new information and communication media to challenge established structures and status quo, (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012). Proponents of the democratic role of mainstream media welcome the new opportunities initiated by the internet which serve to initiate public service and can contribute to its democratic consequences.

The development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and their widespread adoption have brought about remarkable changes in today's' societies (Castells, 2001). The selective nature of Web 1.0 technology allowed retrieving information to those interested users who were already politically engaged (Bimber & Davis, 2003). After the

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[7] Can be accessed at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2796534

emergence of web 2.0, characterized by interactivity, many subsequent scholars have turned their focus on the conditions of increased political interest and consequently political participation and whether it has capacity to turn less participatory behaviors; limited to political discussions, to more active forms of political engagement (Cantijoch et al., 2013).

Social media, a product of Web 2.0 technology, offers many versatile and innovative ways to its users to express themselves politically. The increased use of social networking sites has changed information-seeking patterns and information diffusion patterns among users of social media. Two major reasons become evident while taking into account the popularity of social media. The cost associated with internet communication technologies as compared to its prospective ability to change the discourse of one's life is very low. The use of ICTs i.e. Web 1.0 and Web 2.0, only requires connectivity cost. After one is connected to the internet, the applications and websites of social media can be accessed free of cost. Moreover, since the last few years, cellular phone service providers are also providing internet services along with telephone connections on mobile phones with extraordinary minimal cost. Second, it is popular due to its multi-dimensional use by the social media user i.e. as being publisher, distributor, and consumer at the same time. The pleasure associated with being publisher, distributor, and consumer at the same time has made social networking sites more popular. Social media information analysis has attracted a great deal of concern from political institutions, government sphere, academics, and social media professionals (Stieglitz et al., 2012).

1.2 Social Media as a Phenomenon for Teenagers

Soon after the advent of Web 2.0 technology, the communication, psychological and sociological researchers turned their focus to teen's use of social media for their self-identity; identity formation, self-expression, searching self. Teen is a commonly referred word for an adolescent period, a psychological process of identity formation. Teen is an age-based distinction for adolescents (who is within the age of 13 to 19 with counting -teen) and psychologically which appears as an outcome of the process of cognitive development (Buckingham, 2008). The users of social media create their personal profiles, to express themselves, which is then connected to other users' profiles on the network (large social groups) (Davis, 2014). In context to social media, particularly teens are those who excessively use social media for self-realization and self-reflection.

Out of all, teen users of social media use these websites to stay in touch with their friends whom they frequently meet more than whom they don't meet so often. Moreover, the activities and uses of social media among teen users include making plans with friends, making new friends, to flirt, to be in and maintain a friends' circle, sharing routine activities where they go, what they eat, display of their own personality (Lenhart & Madden, 2007, pewresearch.org). Learning how to make new friends is a major part of one's upbringing, and making new friendships carries a certain amount of risk-taking and for maintaining the relationships. Such communication provides courage when you are in disagreements with others and makes friendships exciting and pleasant (Steiner-Adair, Catherine Teresa H., 2013).

Few other uses include passing spare time, being amused through entertaining stuff posted by other users, staying up to date with the information about the environment, chatting with their relatives, sharing family photos, videos, files, etc. The average time spent on social media per day by the age group 16-24 is 3 hours in USA and the average number of hours this age group spends online in the Asian region is 2.8 hours a day. Statistics show that social media have become prominent parts of life for both teenagers and young people today (pewresearch.org, 2018, review24.com, 2020). However, considering the situation, it implies that the excessive and multi-dimensional use of these sites by every age group has changed its use into a phenomenon.

The popularity of social media among teens is increasing, though there are some social media which are not, a lot, more attractive for teenagers as they were a few years ago. Trends in using social media have been changing with time. For example, three years back, facebook was the most popular social network among teenagers as compared to other social media, now snapchat, instagram, tiktok, and youtube are more popular (Statista, PEW.org, 2019). The reason what psychologists and sociologist reported is that 'post sharing and tagging to attract likes for making them more popular', is pressurizing and annoying to them (Walker, 2018).

On social media different forms of expressions such as Images, texts, cartoons, animations, status updates, videos can be communicated and the structural formation of social media provides technical facilitation of such expressions to end-users. Almost all social media provide the same or different applications for self-expression and they keep on changing and updating these applications keeping in mind the users' interest and making their websites more attractive.

Self-expressions make people feel easy to open their inner selves on different issues. The type and form of content can be of any type which one wants to post or share, or one cares about including one's own life, our family or friend's life, our interests, daily routine, habits, some funny content, any information based upon mainstream media news, any other national or international issue and many more. People posting or sharing their content on social media also desire appreciation by liking it, commenting on it, or even re-liking and reposting their content and measure its appreciation on the bases of the number of 'likes' and selection of particular 'like' emotion such as 'like', 'Love', 'Haha', 'Wow', 'Sad' and 'Angry' on their posts. Social media is a platform which is used to exchange posts by its users very frequently and these posts carry all type of multimedia content including text, pictorial, or any graphical message[8] (Moreau, 2020).

1.3 Social Media Use among Youth

Typically, youth is considered as the age period in-between childhood and adulthood. Though, sociologists accept that the term youth has different meanings and conceptualization in different social and cultural settings if it is taken in context to end of schooling and start of waged labor (Buckingham, 2008). Nonetheless, many scholars suggest that youth should be more associated with 'quality of being young'; freshness, vigor, rather than counting the years. For statistical purposes, individuals between the age of 15 to 24 are regarded as youth, according to the United Nations' report in general assembly on international youth year (1981; 2000). Though there is consensus that the definition of youth is subject to variation in context to circumstances, countries, and research purposes. Among the community of social media, teenagers and youth are leading and more fanatic of social media platforms (Mageto, 2017), over 87% of all online users of age group 18-29 are on facebook. (statista.com, socialmediatoday.com, 2018). Because of the accessibility of social media platform through smartphones, most teenagers and youngsters are on social media every time a day.

I have already discussed that teen is the psychological transformation of a child into an adolescent and they have particular habits of using social media as making and updating their profiles. The most central and the foremost activity on digital media platforms, performed also by youth is 'self-expression'. Moreover, making unique profiles on social media, the formation

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[8] Article can be accessed from <u>The Top Social Networking Sites People Are Using (lifewire.com)</u>

of identity or presentation of self, are not limited to only teens: it is one of the most favorite activities of youngsters too (Davis, 2014)**.** The core point of concern here is 'the way youth communicate their self-identity through digital media platforms. However, the identity formation of an individual is a partly psychological and partly sociological process. Further, a critical and theoretical analysis of audience and audience-situated decisions for the selection of particular media and the particular form of media content is important.

To explain it, I will take advantage of previous theories of identity formation both from Psychological and Sociological perspectives and then will connect it with the work of many researchers in the digital era.

1.4 Audience of Social Media and its Theoretical Framework

In media terminology, the audience is any group of people who receives a media message in the shape of text, video audio, animation, etc. and not just the people who are gathered in some place. The audience is a key concept throughout media studies because all media texts are produced keeping an audience in mind, the people who are going to receive it, and making sense out of any particular message. The audience of every media has its own particular characteristics and needs.

Katz, Eihu; Blumlet, Jay G; Gurevitch (1974) discuss the relationship between media use and its audiences as "media use can be explained in terms of that it provides gratification according to the satisfaction of social and psychological needs of its audiences" The individual develops his own style, personality, and unique self. These idiosyncratic targets are achieved and satisfied through the display of his unique self (Maslow, 1968, pp. 33–34), and an individual moves toward self-actualization of his personality (p.155).

Blumler & Katz identified four main needs of an individual which encourage and motivate an individual to become a part of the interactive communication process and to satisfy his inner self socially and psychologically (Blumler & Katz, 1975). I will here focus on two needs which Blumler and Katz define; Personal Identity and Personal Relationship and develop its framework on the notable work of many scholars.

Here, I put emphasis also on the early psychological work of Erikson (1968) on identity formation in adolescents. According to him, identity formation is a critical process comprising multiple stages. Successful completion of each stage contributes to the formation of identity. In

each stage, through addressing key issues about values, future, relationships, and sexual identity, an individual reaches to self-definition and self-reflection of his personality, which collectively form self-identity (Erikson, 1968). Maslow acknowledges that the process of self-actualization is the foremost need for individualism i.e. his own style, personality, outlook, etc. Life becomes more worthwhile and validated calling for greater creativity, spontaneity, and expressiveness (Maslow, 1968, pp 101-102). However, Blumler and Katz name it as "Personal Identity" a need to define our identity and sense of self. Having a sense of self involves our ability to discover our inner world and then expressing and displaying our inner world to others. Through, world's reactions; praises, comments, and judgments, the self-actualizer views his 'self', expresses 'self', or interacts with the world. To describe behaviors and attitudes associated with their routine experiences, an individual takes advantage of the media where he heels himself as a consumer and as a producer at the same time. Display of the self by showing and expressing daily experiences, routine activities and mood is always self-satisfactory and pleasure-giving.

It has not been a long way that social media have entered into public consciousness. There is a linkage between self-representation and social media as an identity-making ground. Characteristics of human nature as being 'novelty' played a vital role in the attractiveness of social media like facebook. It is necessary to understand the psychology behind making public profiles on social media sites to demonstrate this website's popularity. Another aspect of self-representation comes from the users' creation of hierarchies and groups of who receive or see the messages they post (Enli & Thumim, 2012, p. 100). One's desire to reach or attain psychological contentment through a successful display of personality motivates and leads him to use social media platforms. According to psychological accounts of identity formation, it is a process of cognitive development of an adolescent, but we also need to understand the importance of its recognition and endorsement by others through caregivers and peers' interaction; identity is formed by an individual but should be acknowledged by others (Buckingham, 2008). Other notable work by sociologists like Goffman (1959) is also worth mentioning here, he puts greater emphasis on social interactions; we see ourselves from other's perspectives. Goffman's work stresses the importance of 'presentation of self in everyday life' for understanding individuals in terms of both presenter (sender) and the audience (receiver); a collaborative formation of self. Goffman understands the importance of everyday, face-to-face interactions between people and links it with the relationship of the actor with its audience. Self-image is created when a person

interacts with others and leaves some impressions on them with or without his own consent and others get an understanding of his 'self' through his performance (p.34-54).

The second need which Blumler & Katz talk about to gratify ones' psychological self is the "Personal Relationship" desire to interact with other people. As a social animal, an individual cannot survive alone. Personal relationships can help develop a personal identity. Our sense of personal identity is formed through our interaction with others, as our sense of our own self unfolds when our parents, peers, friends, and other paint a picture of what we are (Gündüz, 2017; Holtzman & Sharpe, 2014). This need is gratified by making relationships with friends, connecting family members, college or university fellows or the other people from the society. Social media has the capacity to build and maintain long distant relations since it does not bear the limitation of time and space. In the virtual environment of social networks, an individual can communicate to the network of friends several times a day without physically being present and can receive and share any information.

The emergence of digital media has opened unprecedented new arenas for youth to explore, test, and express their identities on digital media platforms. Since every communication on social media is connected through interactions with others and characterized with instant feedback (Ganda, 2014a; Holtzman & Sharpe, 2014). On online social platforms, youngsters post their pictures with friends or family members, comment on each other's posts, or press 'like' according to the level of their liking. It is very important to note that it is not only that youth acquires new styles of their 'self-presentation' on social networks but their styles of 'self-presentation' are influenced by their friends. This relationship of mutual influence by members of the social networks defines similarities and reinforcement in content, tone, and style of communication, whether this is about the communication of self-expression or communication of political content (S. Zhao et al., 2008).

As a member of the social media networks, all individuals enjoy the sense of establishing and maintaining their social relations and social networking sites such as facebook and microblogging services such as twitter also strengthen the sense of togetherness facilitated by interpersonal communication among its users. According to Brandtzæg et al. (2010), social surveillance and semi-public exchange of information allow users to form bonds with each other by providing opportunities for actively engaging each other in discussion. They use social networks as a public sphere to experience catharsis and to reduce routine tensions caused by bad

governance, politics, and corruption of political leaders can clearly be seen in the contemporary world.

Global statistics confirm this phenomenon as 88% says, that social media strengthen their relationship with those whom they don't see regularly (PEW.org, 2015). Especially in youngsters, who use facebook as a substitute for creating new relationships and maintaining existing long-distance relationships (Tosun, 2012:1510-1517), however, engaging both with strong ties and weak ties contacts. And for these facebook users, more friends on their online social networks have become a symbol of popularity also (Yau et al., 2018). Social media relations like other social relations are based upon mutual understanding of interconnectedness, this is not necessarily true that on the request of 'add as friend' from an individual, the other one readily accepts that request rather it rests on his or her disposal that he or she accepts friend's request or not. Unless the other user accepts a friend's request, one can't see others' posts and can't receive notifications. And in the case of twitter, a microblogging service, just by simply clicking 'follow', we can start following and seeing others' updates quickly, it does not require request reinforcement and acceptance by the person we are following. Moreover, the other user also does not need to follow us in return, in order to let us receive his updates.

After establishing the role of social media in translating self-representation and self-identity of youth, there comes an urge to keep ourselves up to date with the environment; surveillance, which Blumier and Katz define as a motivation to use certain media. Activities related to surveillance include news and information sharing, discussion on national, social, and political issues. Youngsters are making potential use of social media platforms like Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter for getting information and news updates. Studies on information-seeking patterns among youngsters reveal that most of the youth now prefer online resources for news and information seeking (Bukhari et al., 2018[9]; Hamid et al., 2016; K. S. Kim et al., 2013). It has not only been observed but has an empirical foundation that non-traditional informational sources are becoming more popular in the youngster as compared to traditional sources as indicated by Pew internet project research of June 2017, 2018, 2019.

More than 50% of young Americans prefer social media over other media for news and information (Mitchell et al., 2016). 68% of American adults, somehow, get news and information from social media (PEW.org, 2019). Now the passive audiences of mass media have been

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[9] Article can be accessed through http://informationr.net/ir/23-4/paper804.html

transformed into active and empowered users of social media (Meghan Mahoney & Tang, 2017). The increasing popularity of social media and youngsters' substantial dependency on social media platforms, like Facebook and Twitter for political updates and communication, have triggered the interest of many researchers to study this phenomenon in different political setups, countries, and on the youth of different cultural and social backgrounds. The proliferation of social media and its adoption as a communication tools in the everyday routine of young masses is changing the social as well as political habits of the youngsters. Broader research trends towards common uses by youth include such as information seeking (K. S. Kim et al., 2013), education (Abbas et al., 2019; Bernard & Dzandza, 2018; Hung & Yuen, 2010; Tariq et al., 2012; Zachos et al., 2018) social, political awareness and environmental awareness (Boulianne, 2016; Nazir & Bhatti, 2016; Rahim & Jalal adeen, 2016), their use as a social capital (Burgess et al., 2017; Jose van Dijck, 2013; N. Lin, 2005).

1.5 Social Media and Political Expression

Political expression is a way to express individual political thoughts and political views through some channel such as face-to-face communication and machine mediated communication. Political expression, academically, and in research, is measured as political talk and political discussion, which are different from political action (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010). I assume that political expression is a basic and starting point for the analysis as it is responsible to encouraging and leading to other online and offline political behaviors and a plethora of studies endorse this relationship (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Gil De Zúñiga et al., 2009; C. Vaccari et al., 2015; Valenzuela et al., 2012). However, in this regards the question, does social media's political or non-political use, as an outcome of interpersonal communicative behavior, facilitates or encourages political expression on social media, needs to be addressed theoretically.

Many studies highlight social media's technological features which facilitate any type of expression on social media. Being a merger of interpersonal and mass-mediated communication, social media has the ability to enhance the expected outcomes of expression by communicating it to an unlimited number of people on the network immediately (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). Moreover, it is argued that empowerment of social media user with user-generated content; via informal public talk, dialogue and discussion, free speech, freedom of expression to as many diverse political views as there are users on the network, and politically sensitive subjects can be

openly discussed and dissent can be expressed, allows and encourages people to express their views and open their political self on social media (Velasquez & Rojas, 2017, p. 2).

Political expression on social networking sites, blogs, and microblogging services include individual user's own thoughts, opinions, feedback on received thoughts, which appear in routine talks and discussions on social media and can be in the form of textual messages, pictures, illustrations, videos, graphics, voice, etc. Political expression on media is based on unique characteristics of user-generated content, interpersonal, and mass-mediated nature of the communication process at the same time and same platform (Velasquez & Rojas, 2017). The ability of social media to communicate user-generated content with minimum effort and technological ability (Lilleker et al., 2011) makes its users more empowered and information rich (Lomborg, 2014). These individual political expressions pass through a continuous revision and development; as the network member further shares it to their friends' network leaving their expressions on it. These individual expressions help to build or to change the individuals' opinions after continuous revision (Price et al., 2006). Users of social media express their political views in different ways, by textual political discussions, favoring and criticizing political parties, sharing, commenting, criticizing and liking political posts, joining and liking political pages.

Moreover, political expression through online platforms has become a comfortable and convenient way to express political views because of time and space limitations of the off-line political processes. Through social media's political expression, citizens are now the part of the political process by expressing and sharing their political views. Both, the activists and the supporters of political parties are not depending upon the limits of time, space, and identity for expressing their political views. Because of this culture of sharing, they are equally participating in the political process through online social platforms (Castells, 2010; Jose van Dijck, 2013; Manuel, 2012).

Many researchers have focused on multi-dimensional (political and non-political) uses of social media and their relationship with political expression and supported the argument that social media's use, whether political or non-political, facilitates and encourages political discussions among users of social media. Informational use of social media is positively linked to political expression among users of social media. Informational use of social media increases political knowledge (Carpini et al., 2004) and the increased political knowledge uncovers

opportunities for citizens for their political expression (H. G. de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). In the same context, the scholars have also emphasized the role of social media use in shaping the political self of an individual by influencing political views and targeting the fundamental political concepts of individuals (Lane et al., 2017) and via creating political knowledge, helps in fostering politically informed citizens (Carpini et al., 2004). Velasquez & Rojas analyzed social networking sites in context to measuring one's communication competence and expected outcome which occurs in a result to influence others' behaviors. By developing the conceptual model, *Social Media Communication Competency* (SMCC), they found that social media communication competence and social outcome influence an individual's political expression (2017, pp. 1–13). Another dominating situation, which users may experience while expressing their political self is that the political expression, which seems to be difficult on offline spaces and people avoid speaking publically, is easy on online spaces such as social media (Ho & Mcleod, 2008).

It is necessary to understand that because of the structural differences in different social media, the forms and the characteristics of political expression from one social media to another are also bit different, for example, social networking websites and microblogging services or blogs are two different types of social media. The nature of the content, producers, and receivers, the way these facilitate communication processes are somehow different in the case of both. As Facebook is structured with very centralized friends' networks in which individuals become friends with mutual understanding and on twitter anyone can follow an individual and see his or her tweets without requiring an individual's permission. And in case of blog, starting from a personal diary style opinion-based writing on a specific subject, much more have been introduced up till now such as work of a group of writers in one blog, discussion platform for readers (Skrba[10], 2018, www.firstsiteguide.com). As there is variation in social media platforms, individual users also have their own different needs and motivations for the selection of the particular social media platform for their political or other types of expressions (Uses & Gratification approach[11]).

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[10] Anya Skrba and Artem Minaev are experts in developing and designing social media business platforms, they work with www.firstsiteguide, which is a platform for learning online business development skills. Article can be accessed from https://firstsiteguide.com/what-is-blog/.

[11] Katz, E, Blumler, J.G., and Gurevitch, M. (1973-1974), "Uses and Gratification Research", The Public Opinion Quarterly, vol.37, JSTOR, pp. 509-523

The comfort level with usability of a particular communication network and with other users on the network, the degree of appropriateness of communicative discourse, and self-efficacy on social media determine the degree to which individuals can express their political thoughts (Velasquez & Rojas, 2017, p. 8). Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik (2019) analyzed social media affordance by measuring collective political expression on the social media platform *musical.ly*. They conclude social media platforms musical.ly facilitates and encourages political expression by allowing users to connect with the assumed like-minded audiences having similar beliefs. Online social media communities *Scratch, Archive of our own* and *hitRECord* are also examined to find the efficacy of these platforms for youth's political expression and suggests a positive relationship (Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2018).

1.5.1 Political Expression on Facebook in Pakistan

According to Geo.tv (2018), Facebook has been ranked the second most accessed website after Google in Pakistan. Among all internet users, 92% are Facebook users and young people are in majority of the users who use this social network (Statista, 2020; Karamat & Farooq, 2016).

The rise in facebook use, among every age group especially among youngsters also shows its wide use in online political activities such as discussions about political issues, political leaders' activities, criticizing government's mal-functioning about political-cum-national issues, campaign activities, fund-raising for different national and political issues, election and voting awareness, election campaigning, promoting certain political agenda and many more (Kahne & Bowyer, 2018). Political expression on Facebook may take a variety of forms and is used by citizens, political parties, political candidates, and political workers as well. Many studies focused and found a positive relationship between youngsters' social media use and political expression (Mihailidis, 2014; H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016) and by political parties for promotion of their political agenda (Stieglitz et al., 2012; Tasenţe & Nicoleta, 2013). Involvement in political activities and becoming part of the political process through online platforms has become comfortable and convenient for the people who previously always ignoreto become the part of the political process just because of time and space limitations of the

Katz, E, Blumler, J.G., and Gurevitch, M. (1974), "Utilization of Mass Communication by Individual" in The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspective on Gratifications Research, ed. J.G Blumler and E. Katz, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage; pp. 19-32

off-line political process (Skoric et al., 2016). Now both, the activists and the supporters of political parties, are not depending upon the limits of time, space, and identity; they are equally participating in the political process through online social platforms. Social networking websites are enabling people to overcome the dependency of these limits.

The tremendous increase in the interaction of mainstream political parties with people in Pakistan has been observed in previous years. This phenomenon caught more hype during election campaigns. On the other hand, political personalities are and should be more accessible to common people and facebook has been proved an effective communication channel to reach both masses and political candidates (Z. Ali et al., 2013). Facebook users have direct access to their favorite political personality's facebook page or political party's official facebook page. This direct access to a favorite political personality lets the users feel having private communication between a politician and the end-user. Moreover, these personal contacts with political personalities give the users more confidence in their political party. On the other hand, these personal contacts with political personalities hold the power to make politicians accountable for their actions and words in front of them. The other major benefit that can be achieved through the use of facebook by political parties is to promote a political agenda (Rizvi[12], 2016, MIT Technology Review, technologyreview.pk: *Social Media n Electioneering*). Every political party's online activists have a long friend's list of volunteers on facebook accounts, who send messages to their friends, termed as supporters, about political activities or political campaigns during elections. These volunteer members invite the party's supporters and other young masses to join a political party's group, a facebook page, a particular meeting, or a campaign (Madison, 2007, p.10). Volunteers and the party's members are directed to visit the party's facebook and twitter accounts and to disseminate political content to other users (Saifudding Ahmed, PTI, 2014).

All political parties in Pakistan have started using social media to get connected with their workers and to engage their supporters in different political activities in recent years. They have been successful in attracting their youth supporters more among all; this is particularly because youth is already prone to use these new technologies. In Pakistan, political parties such as PTI, PML-N, PPP, and many others have their own official facebook pages and twitter

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[12] Jawwad Rizvi is Senior Economic Correspondent at *The News*, a leading English Daily. An online article can be accessed from http://www.technologyreview.pk/social-media-and-big-data-in-politics/.

accounts. Even political parties and the political leaders of those parties separately have their pages and accounts. The media cells of these political parties carry proper official structure and are busy creating and spreading several political posts on daily basis. Their aim is to mobilize people and to motivate them to participate in the political process (Atif Rauf, head of Pakistan Muslim League-N's social media team[13], themedieline.org, 2018).

Further, media cells of every political party are executing more than one facebook pages with different titles, and political content through all pages is simultaneously and extensively communicated; which includes political campaigning, attack messages for other political parties, important visits of political leaders, promotion of remarkable work done by political parties and political leaders, statements of political leaders on national events and policy matters, etc.

Generally, social media users are very actively involved in social media political communication regardless of any party affiliation. They vigorously reply to political tweets and retweet, pick up political content from the pages of their favorite political party, and reuse it to communicate to their friends' network. Impartiality of the two-way communication process through social networking sites especially in this political scenario of Pakistan, along with the accessibility of new media has made it a popular medium among youngsters for political communication.

However, it is not only true from the perspective of political parties but according to many studies from Pakistan's political background, facebook has been regarded as the most popular social media platform among the masses also, for the speedy diffusion of political information (Eijaz, 2013).

Feedback from users of facebook pages in the form of 'likes' 'reaction' 'comments' can also be judged through social media applications. This feedback helps facebook page administrators, campaign strategists, and policymakers to devise such strategies that can attract more fans to their facebook pages and satisfy existing fans. With the widespread use of facebook, political elites now discuss and justify routine matters and their routine statements in front of the public (Masip et al., 2019). Furthermore, there is another trend that has become common now that politicians' activities, statements, and postings are discussed on mainstream

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[13] Article can be accessed from https://themedialine.org/news/the-new-face-of-social-media-driven-elections-in-pakistan/

media also by journalists and political analysts. This opens up another forum of discussion on these matters and makes these politicians more accountable in front of the public.

As it has been mentioned earlier, that facebook is striving to add new features in facebook website and application to attract and engage users i.e. facebook 'trending' is another contributory factor to accelerate the popularity of facebook among its users. Facebook trends are personalized social and political hot topics which are set based upon social behaviors of facebook use and users' locations. These topics are discussed among facebook users, and facebook users want to listen and talk about these. Mainstream media rather focusing on just routine reporting also gives coverage to facebook hot trends. It has also been observed that supporters and the fans of political parties are so much involved on facebook that most of the time they get emotional about their favorite political party and political debates turn into a political fight.

1.5.2 Political Expression on Twitter in Pakistan

Twitter is an influential medium connecting celebrities, political figures, sportsmen, showbiz personalities to the common people, and providing an opportunity to talk to them directly. Among all social media, Twitter is the world's largest microblogging service (Barnett, 2011; Parmelee & Bichard, 2013) which has attracted political elites to publicize themselves among masses and is acknowledged by political actors and political parties globally (Khawar[14], 2017; Cozma, 2013; Romero et al., 2011). Twitter got significant research potential in recent years for being quite different and vibrant information and communication medium both for masses and even more for political actors (D. Zhao & Rosson, 2009). The use of twitter by politicians and their election campaigns is a very popular area of study all over the world. After its emergence as an innovative political public sphere, many researchers have turned the focus of their research towards twitter as it has been observed that most of the political actors make very substantial use of twitter not only during election campaigns but as a routine activity also. Moreover, twitter is not taken only as a political public sphere but as a powerful liberating force challenging monarchical systems in many parts of the world (Winder, 2014).

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[14]Hasaan Khawar is a public policy professional and also contributes by writing on Express Tribune, a national English newspaper. Article can be access from https://tribune.com.pk/story/1441437/twitter-pakistani-politicians-opinion

As is in many other parts of the world, twitter continues to evolve and expand in Pakistan also. According to the statistics (2018), there are 3.5 million twitter users in Pakistan, almost all political parties have their official twitter accounts and, similarly, all political leaders also have their personal twitter accounts and they have millions of people in their accounts following them. Imran khan, the current prime minister of Pakistan, from Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaf is managing his twitter account since 2010, similarly, Maryam Nawaz from Muslim league-N is operating since 2012, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari from Pakistan Peoples' Party is using twitter account since 2011(Twitter.com). One thing which is evident from these figures is that these political leaders have been making effective and aggressive use of social media since the start of their political career, and the boom of social media in Pakistan. Another interesting fact is that the heads of the two leading political parties, Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League (N) which have been ruling for the last thirty years alternatively, and formed government in 2008 and 2013 respectively, don't have their personal twitter accounts rather other leaders from their party have twitter account and use their accounts on the behalf of the party. In general, political candidates and party representatives from all popular political parties of Pakistan are, now, making extensive use of twitter for routine political campaigning and election campaigning as well.

Throughout the world, twitter has been used in election campaigning and to spread political agenda to a large number of people. Political figures send their messages through the medium of twitter, these messages are called Tweets. These tweets are then followed by millions of people called 'followers'. Many politicians use twitter and other people follow them and retweet in response to their tweets. Most of the politicians also use it to spread the agenda of their particular political party or to spread policy information. Tweets may, usually, comprise of the responsible official statements by party representatives and also the personal thoughts of political leaders and party representatives on different issues.

The following are some tweets by political leaders of Pakistan to show tweeting trends of politicians[15].

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[15] These tweets are randomly selected to show the content, format and language of tweets. Political leaders write tweets usually in both languages; Urdu and English. Tweets can be accessed from personal accounts of political leaders i.e. @ImranKhanPTI, @MaryamNSharif, @BBhuttoZardari

Imran Khan@ImranKhanPTI

PTI opposes all schemes to whiten money stolen from ppl of Pak especially benefitting past/present public off holders

Imran Khan@ImranKhanPTI

What a pleasure to see the children of Mohmand carefree & full of joy as they take part in #Plant4Pakistan. We are committed to mainstreaming of what was FATA & now is part of KP, in terms of human development.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif @MaryamNSharif (written in Urdu language)

حقوق مسلم لیگ ن محمد نواز شریف کا الیکشن سے قبل قوم کے نام پیغام۔ 25 جولائی کو اپ نے قائد د

زادی اور ووٹ کی عزت کے لیے اٹھ کھڑے ہو، گھروں سے ند کلو آ کی

اور شیر پہ ر مہر لگاؤ

Translation: *The message of the Leader of Muslim League-N for Nation before the election-"Stand up and Come out of your home on 25 July for the respect of your vote and for your rights. Stamp your vote for LION".*

BilawalBhuttoZardari @BBhuttoZardari

Remembering a true #Jiyala today. The people's Governor Punjab. May we succeed in building the egalitarian Pakistan he died fighting for.

It is commonly believed that twitter is used by a comparatively more literal class in any society. It provides a quick stream of updates from scholars, news journalists, celebrities, political figures, and experts. It empowers people by building their opinions on different political agendas (Valenzuela et al., 2018). People usually follow their favorite celebrities from showbiz, politics, sports getting updates about their activities and lives.

Another important trend of twitter use is observed in recent years is that it is creating political interest in non-political figures that are socially active and well connected with the masses. It is observed that even non-political figures such as showbiz personalities, sportspersons, and other celebrities they even not having a keen interest in political issues, yet

seem to be tweeting usually on political issues. These non-political figures clearly understand the importance of their twitter use and their participation in political issues through twitter. In this way, those who are not directly involved in political discussions, become the part of political process. As an empirically untested phenomenon, I can, somehow, assume that people who are following their non-political celebrities also start taking interest in political issues because of their favorite non-political celebrities.

The frequency of twitter use in terms of the number of tweets by politicians is the second indicator of political behavior. The question that how frequently these political leaders use their twitter account can be answered by a simple analysis of their number of tweets. For example, since PMLN's Maryam Nawaz joined twitter account, the average number of tweets per day are 27+ and of PTI's Dr.Arif Alvi since 2007 the number of average tweets per day is 7+ and PPP's Bilawal Bhutto Zardari the average number of tweets per day is 4- since 2011. One another interesting figure is that the average number of tweets from PTI's official twitter account is more than 65 per day. This aggressive use of twitter by politicians shows that twitter communication may have a significant impact on election campaigning and increasing voters' turnout in elections (Saifuddin Ahmed & Skoric, 2014, p. 2244).

Like other social media content, twitter's tweets are also part of mainstream media news content, tweets of political leaders are discussed by journalists on mainstream media. Mainstream media (TV, Newspapers, Radio) is constantly shaping the images of political figures for general masses, even if political figures do not shape their image their self (Yaqub et al., 2017; www.theguardian.com, 2016). In the case of the marital breakup of PTI leader Imran Khan and his wife Reham Khan, the tweets of both Imran Khan and Reham Khan were discussed on TV channels and Newspapers and preparing their image according to their tweets. Individual politician's tweets or interaction between various agents on twitter even triggers news coverage (Broersma & Graham, 2012).

Apart from 'tweets as a news source', journalists also discuss politicians' tweets in their talk shows. Political leaders by tweeting, are providing an opportunity for journalists to discuss their tweets on mainstream media (Van Der Zee, 2009). Not only the general public follows tweets directly through twitter but also through mainstream media where journalists pick tweets on a particular issue and discuss them. In the famous incidence of Dawn leaks, very confidential information about military establishment was broken out by government officials and on this

issue, tremendous tweets of different political leaders were discussed on mainstream media by journalists. And this discussion of mainstream media was even criticized by the ruling government. It can be argued that somehow this phenomenon can trigger government policies and can make the government accountable in front of the public.

The following table shows facebook and twitter data of three national-level political parties, till November 2020. The data from official facebook pages and personal twitter accounts is given.

Table 1.1: Political Parties' Facebook and Twitter followers

Political Party	Facebook likes	Facebook followers	No.of Tweets	Twitter followers
Pakistan Tehrik-e-insaf (PTI) @PTIofficial	6.7 Million	7.1 Million	257.3 K	5 Million
@ImranKhan	10 Million	10.5 Million	6.7 K	12.8 Million
Pakistan Muslim League-N (PMLN)	3.7 K	3.8 K	43.1 K	1.7 K
@MarayamNShareef	920 K	1.07 Million	62.5 K	5.7 Million
Pakistan People's Party (PPP) @BBhuttoZardari	531 K	408 K	13.4 K	4 Million

1.6 Operationalization of Social Media Use

It is very important to look into how social media use as an independent variable is operationalized for the purpose of this study. Given that, several social media are available in this high-choice media environment, every researcher has his own operational definition of social media use depending on the requirements of his research. Social media use is one of the independent variables used in the study. In order to measure social media use of an individual user, the extent of general 'exposure and access' of facebook and twitter is taken into consideration.

A composite set of multiple measures, separately for facebook use and twitter use, constitute social media use. The inquiry about their use of particular social media, social media usage rate in terms of social media usage duration and frequency of their social media use, and their major interests for using social media excavate overall use of social media. Moreover, the

use of particularly facebook and twitter enlist certain other dimensions such as the length of their friends' list, the length of university friends' list, duration, and frequency of facebook use. Similarly, the length of followers and followings' list and the duration and frequency of twitter use is noted for analyzing twitter use.

An index of social media use was created by computing responses to the questions formulated on each of the above topics. Although, the items were measured on a different scale to satisfy the requirement of questions, however, all were in a 'less to more' direction.

1.7 Operationalization of Political Expression

Political expression on social media is the main independent variable of the study. I consider that the concept of political expression, somehow, is of a subjective nature. It is very difficult to ask respondent 'how lengthy their discussions are' rather, I adopted a way following its conceptual definition simply ' a communication that expresses a particular opinion on current events or political issues' and ' a political behavior that is communicated' (Velasquez and Rojas, 2017). In reference to social media political expression political content generation, its consumption and distribution to other fellow facebook and twitter members are covered.

To measure social media political expression, following topics are included. (1) facebook post sharing rate in terms of average no. of posts they share and average no. of posts they receive, (2) the no. of facebook page of political parties are added (3) following of twitter accounts of political parties and political figures (4) frequency of their political discussion about favorite and opposing political parties (5) activities they perform on others' posts and tweets (6) and their willingness to respond others' posts about favorite political party or candidate or opposing political party or candidate. Finally, an index of social media political expression was created by computing responses on above-mentioned items, measured on different scale.

Chapter 2. Social Media: A New Public Sphere

2.1 Introduction

The emergence of global communication as a result of the advent of digital communication technologies at the start of 21 century has started a new arena of discussion among scholars from social, political, and cultural spheres of studies. This discussion got an interesting turn when the scholars tried to find the similarities in eighteenth-century public sphere and twenty-first century public spheres and made a comparison on the bases of the criticism on mainstream media as a public sphere and viability of digital platforms as a public sphere (Çela, 2015; Deane, 2005; Mahlouly, 2013). They tried to find out the relationship of Habermas's classical theory of the public sphere in the context of internet communication technologies with a special focus on cultural and political applications of this contemporary public sphere. Moreover, among them many have argued about the enhanced likelihood of the exposure of public discourse by empowering citizens the same as political leaders and media experts; everyone gets equal opportunity to communicate (Mahlouly, 2013). Many scholars from political and communication studies found the implications of this relationship in the parameters associated with political communication (Edgerly et al., 2010; Kruse et al., 2018). Based upon the quality of the internet's large scale interactive communication and the inclusion of unheard voices (Stromer-Galley, 2003), many scholars have also attempted to examine the subversive potentials of social media communication to alter the passive political norms to participatory democratic political norms through deliberative public discourse while also considering the manipulation and public opinion formation due to corporate economic interests (Jose van Dijck, 2013; Loader & Mercea, 2012).

Starting with highlighting the historical perspective of public spheres, I will try to identify the characteristics of Habermas's concept of the public sphere and then relating this concept to newly-emerged public spheres in the form of social media platforms. After establishing the theoretical foundation of 'the social media as a public sphere', scholarly evidence, based upon theoretical debate from previous studies, largely comprised of 'the social media as a facilitator of public discourse', is explored (Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins & Carpentier, 2013; Loader & Mercea, 2012; Mahlouly, 2013). I will also emphasize the scope of alternative roles of social media users as 'media users' and as 'media producers' at the same time. Finally, I will discuss the feasibility of social media's political discourse in participatory democracy which

leads to democratic political actions. Although many scholars attempted to layout an empirical foundation of the practicability of social media as a facilitator of public democratic discourse, however, it is also very necessary to understand this relationship in the political, cultural, and social settings of Pakistan.

2.2 Habermas's Concept of the Bourgeois Public Sphere

The ideal notion of the public sphere is explained as a place where private people gather to discuss public issues freely and without state pressures (Jurgen Habermas, 1962; Jürgen Habermas, 1996). The history of public spheres is as old as Roman and Greek history. Public spheres were existed with a different name i.e. *'Res Publica'* in Roman culture and *'Agora'* in Greek cultures and having different purposes. But in the 18th century the idea of public spheres emerged through the growth of coffee houses, saloons, public gatherings, literary and other societies. Further, the concept of *"media as public spheres"* was initially discussed by Habermas[16] (1962) in his book "The structural Transformation of Public sphere" to explore the status of public opinion in bourgeois society that's why he calls it 'bourgeois public sphere'. According to Habermas, the public sphere is a virtual and imaginary community that does not exist in its real sense; ideally, the public sphere is made up of private people gathered at one place as a public and bridging the need of society with the state (p-176). It was only because of the public spheres that everything got revealed and visible to all, and it was because of the discussions that issues among citizens were addressed. The public spheres which Habermas talked about, were used to be very liberal and democratic in nature because they have the principle foundation of open discussion on any issue and the right to participate freely. Although, Habermas further talks about the decomposition of social foundations of the public sphere (p-4, 16-18), however, the basic characteristics remained the same. The extent of access, the degree of autonomy, no concept of hierarchy, acting upon the rule of state law, equal access, and quality of participation are the conceptual points of the public sphere (Rutherford, 2000).

For the public spheres which were existed in the eighteenth century, Habermas placed the success of the public sphere in the use of reason for rational-critical discourse which means that

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[16] Habermas (1991). The structural Transformation of Public sphere: An inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society, Translated by Thomas Burger. This work originally appeared in German under the Title Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (1962) by Habermas.

everyone is an equal participant along with supreme communication skill and power of argument (p.88-99). This new social order, formed by the public spheres, criticized the illegitimate use of power and domination by the state. Institutions like coffee houses and salons were the centers of the bourgeois public and he calls them the 'literary public sphere' where the discussion of art and literature started. Habermas emphasized the role of these public spheres as a way for society to communicate its interests.

2.6 Criticism on Habermas' Bourgeois Public Sphere

Habermas's work on the bourgeois Public sphere is remarkable and provides thoughtfulness for fundamentals of the ideals of the public sphere and the ideas for further research. His research work has been admired by many researchers of the late 19th century and remained under intensive discussion for many decades. Habermas's analysis, about the important role of media in politics, how corporate interests have captured this mediated public sphere and new directions upon which mediated public sphere works, got particular attention.

However, his work was not left without criticism; he faced criticism even in the start of his professional career. He was mainly criticized for oversimplifying the liberal concept of the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas's concept of bourgeois public sphere, indeed, can be taken as an ideal model as a reference for democratic and egalitarian societies. Even, the critiques argue that Habermas's account of the public sphere is overly idealized, hence, better not to generalize. This is a much optimized public sphere considering specific conditions and circumstances and ignoring others (Kellner, 2014).

Moreover, Habermas was also criticized for not considering plebeian, proletarian and women public spheres (Oscar Negt et al., 2019; Oskar Negt & Kluge, 1972, Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung[17])(Oscar Negt et al., 2019) and Kellner believed that in actual, bourgeois public spheres were mainly dominated by property-owning males and these groups were kept marginalized from public debates, having no representation of these groups in public spheres (2014). The ideal of the public sphere has never been fully achieved by most accounts till the eighteenth century, When the ethnic, gender, and class discriminations were questioned and criticized in the late 19th and 20th centuries and the public sphere approached more closely to its ideal to some extent.

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[17] Negt, O. & Kluge, A., (1972), Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. It was translated in English by Labanyi, 1988.

According to the critics of Habermas's bourgeois public sphere, the importance and the implication of these public spheres, other than the bourgeois one, should also be taken into account to understand generalizability of eighteenth-century public sphere in reference to excluded voices of neglected groups. Since eighteenth-century public spheres were not the forums of rational debate in the real sense when certain groups 'participation was excluded, and to get them into the mainstream and their voices to be heard, the better idea was to develop a concept with the multiplicity of public spheres.

Kellner, on one side, admiring his work on the 'Public sphere as a democratic liberal space' for starting a new arena of productive debate and new insights into the relationship of liberal democracy and public life, and on the other side, presenting a critical analysis of Habermas's philosophical turns on Structural transformation, later, in 1990. On the structural transformation of the public sphere, differentiating between facts and norms, Habermas took a new stance that communicative language itself has the power to undermine societal domination by introducing norms to challenge distortions of communication to reach societal democratization. According to Kellner, Habermas's new normative stance, based on language, provided stronger theoretical grounds for establishing critical theory and to overcome the deadlock, which the Frankfurt School had experienced (2014), but indeed it has provided a new dimension to critics to understand liberal public sphere and the process of democratization.

Hartley (1992) pointed that because Habermas's conception of 'public sphere and public' had lost its meaning (in the particular scenario of above-mentioned criticism), it was necessary to look at the mediated form of the public in order to know the state of contemporary public domain (p.1).

2.3 Media-Dominated Public Spheres

Moving this discussion further, Habermas discusses the transformation of these liberal and democratic public spheres into media-dominated public spheres of media-dominated era such as in the electronic and print era. In the first step, I will try to explore the characteristics of media-dominated public sphere, according to the basic theory of public sphere by Habermas (1962, 1991) and also underline the major criticism on the notion of 'broadcast and print media as a public sphere' from different perspectives with the support of the work of many scholars. To build an analytical framework, the studies on political transformation in the country and the role

of mass media especially private television in these transformations are used as a concrete base for the optimization of social media applications in encouraging the democratization of the political processes in Pakistan. In the next step, I will also thrash out the issues and concerns associated with mainstream mediated political discourse and will discuss the arguments according to which the digital platforms takes the position of the democratic public sphere over Habermas's media-dominated public spheres.

Political discussions on television may take many forms, i.e. news reports, informal one on one political talk, dialogue, and one-to-many (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994)**.** Infotainment shows are also a kind of political communication disseminating political information informally (Lunt, 2009). And similarly, on print media, through column writing, editorial writing, and political interviews, mediated political discourse takes place. News channels are heavily loaded by political shows starting from prime time to late at night. Most of the political talk shows are guests oriented; they invite political personalities in talk shows to let them justify their position on different political issues and to make them accountable in front of the public.

Transparency in political discourse is possible by the transparent flow of information, making political elites accountable in front of the public and unbiased coverage of both, the government and the opposing political parties. Mass media can be helpful in making the political system more transparent, the government officials accountable, keeping check and balance on the operations of the government, and also counting on the blame games of opposition (Arshad & Ashraf, 2014; Rahman & Abida, 2014).

In certain cases, making the state officials and political elites accountable on mainstream media in front of the public strengthens the contemporary democracies. Transparent, unbiased, and free flow of information that serves to make the actions of public officials accountable in front of the public, can also serve to improve the performance of the government (Gordon, 2000, pp. 297–319). Journalists of mainstream media take up this opportunity and try to make government officials accountable by asking questions concerning issues in their Television shows. This journalistic tradition is very common in broadcast media in many parts of the world. In Pakistan, after the liberalization of media, broadcast and print media did not face any sustainable restrictions in content selection and presentation as such: in every democratic political regime, the government and opposition both were held accountable through Television

programs. The restoration of the judiciary movement[18] in Musharraf regime was one such example in which the media performed freely as a watchdog. Electronic and print media worked in two way (i) Lawyers' movement for restoration of judiciary coupled with countering efforts of Musharraf's government to control the movement of restoration of Judiciary was caught up live by satellite TV channel and got public attention and (ii) during the movement, the government officials, the organizers and the leaders of the movement were called on daily bases in Television programs to justify their position in front of public.

Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) operation[19], in July 2007, was another important event of media's transparent coverage, an example of media freedom and media's watchdog function. This operation was broadcast live on all news channels. However, later on, making Musharraf's government was made accountable on broadcast and print media outlets for the atrocities done during the operation.

Another situation of accountability arises when the issues are raised through public consensus on social media platforms. However, the mainstream media, evaluating the importance of the issue on social media, take up the issue, and bring the responsible persons accountable in Television programs. For example, in Sep. 2020 when a woman, a mother of three, was raped on Lahore-Gujranwala motorway, The CCPO Umer Sheikh, one of the most senior police officers in Lahore, partly blamed the victim for the incident arguing that it would have not happened if she would have not been traveling late night. His statement was intensively discussed and heavily criticized on social media and eventually, because of the rigorous criticism on social media, he was put on trial on mainstream media.

Synthesizing the above discussion 'the world of mass media is powerful' and it tries to manufacture public opinion and to get consensus among the public. Though, despite the fact that

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[18] Restoration of Judiciary movement (Adlya Bachao Tehreek) was a movement organised by Lawyers and approximately 80,000 lawyers across the country participated in non-violent protests. President Gen.Musharraf suspended then-Chief Justice of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry on 9 March, 2007. As a result of succeful 4-months long campaign, Chaughry was reinstated on 20 July, 2007 (Humanrights watch, 2007). Seconted wave of this movement started in November 2007 when Gen.Musharraf suspended Pakistan's constitution and introduced Provisional constitutional order to rule without judicial impediment.

[19] In July 2007, Pakistan faced a conflict where the government of Pakistan, headed by General Musharaf, came in direct conflict with the administration of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) and the adjacent Jamia Hafsa Maderssah (a religious school of women), in Islamabad, which were 'supposedly' operated by Islamic militants who wanted to impose the Sharia (Islamic religious law). Pakistan Army's special service group attacked the building of Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa. This operation was constantly monitored and covered by Media

mass media is the only media that contributes to political transparency by news coverage, its use is inevitable in every respect.

Putting aside the above discussion, however, the situation is different because today's democratic governments, political parties, and political leaders may use mainstream media to simulate the political virtues of transparency through media exaggeration and biasness (Vikul, 2016[20]). However, in the age of mass media when democratic governments and politicians use it to simulate the political virtues of transparency, this may distort true political values (Vikul, 2016, docsity.com). In many studies, professional ethics in issue coverage as sensationalism, biases, and objectivity are analyzed (Kleemans et al., 2017; Mulla, 2019; Raza et al., 2012). It is argued that in most of the issues, mass media presents biased coverage which is a consequence of more liberalized media policy and lack in professional ethics of journalism (Arshad & Ashraf, 2014, p. 5; Eijaz, 2013). Further, talking about biasness, Eijaz blamed Pakistani private television for giving marginalized coverage to less prominent people and working as a mouthpiece for the ruling class (2012).

2.4 Connectivity of Mainstream Media Discourse and Public Discourse in Pakistan

According to Habermas's concept, dominant media takes over the position to alter public opinion through persuasive communication. In such a scenario the scope of independent rational debate is very limited, hence enhancing the scope of public organs such as electronic media and press (Deane, 2005). Many studies highlight many issues and concerns associated with rational political discourse on mainstream media. These public organs initiate the debate on the issues and concerns which media elites think that these should be discussed among the public on public spheres (P.178). It has been observed that mainstream media initiate agenda through their programs and different kinds of writing and open a forum of discussion for public on common public spheres putting direct or indirect influence on social media audience (Aruguete, 2017; Lobzhanidze, Aleksandre Wenjun et al., 2013; Van Aelst et al., 2017), where people used to gather and discuss those national and political issues which media giants have started. Another question mark on the credibility of mainstream media as a public sphere is that mass media has a gradual and indirect behavioral influence on the audience and through several political talk

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[20] Article can be accessed from <u>Docsity</u> https://www.docsity.com/en/role-of-mass-media-in-democracy-mass-communication-and-role-of-media-handout/84913/

shows and press articles it tries to mold public opinion according to a set agenda. It is also argued that mainstream media try to diffuse the importance of certain issues in the public's mind. This is how media initiate public agenda through the media agenda (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; McCombs, 2003).

For example, analyzing the same issue in Pakistani media setting, when mainstream media were talking about Reham Khan[21] and Imran khan's divorce, it was also a hot topic of discussion on social media at that time. Similarly, in 2016 a story regarding the killing of renowned Qawwal Amjad Sabri[22] in Karachi, "Amjad Sabri killed in Karachi" was broadcast on television channels, on the same day (with hash tag) # Ajmad Sabri killed was the most discussed story on social media. And the same situation can be observed by close analysis of mainstream media stories and hot topics of discussion on social media.

The effects of the limited independent rational debate can particularly be observed in state-controlled media. Media, in many parts of the world including China, Middle East, Asia, Iran, India, and Pakistan was, to some extent, at the disposal of government shared information a few years back. Whereas, in the case of private media the situation is a bit different because in this case the media is controlled by private interests linked to government and other elites (Deane, 2005; Jurgen Habermas, 1962; Moholi, 2015). This situation is the same for Pakistani print and electronic media. Such influences and pressures put barriers in the coverage of news media for fulfilling their sensitive role in sustaining democracy in Pakistan

The commercialization of media and the takeover of this public sphere by big media organizations have made it ideological dependent on the interests of media elites. Similarly, mass media especially Television faces many pressures including advertising, government, political, cross-media ownership, and other stakeholders, and these pressure groups have their own

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[21] Reham Khan is the Ex-wife of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Their marriage lasted for just one year. Just before the elections 2018 she got her book published. Most part of this book was written in adversary to Imran Khan. Initially, Political analysts thought of this book very sensitive for his reputation and political career, but afterward, this book proved of no value because of baseless accusations.

[22] Qawwal Amjad Sabri was a Pakistani musician famous for Qawwali (Sufi Islamic devotional poetry), Naat (poems praising Muhammad P.B.U.H) and Sufi singing. He was assassinated in 2016 and the story of his murder was top trend on social media and this news was a major story on mainstream media at that time.

interests (International Media Support[23], 2009). Eventually, these pressures do not let the voice of the common man reach to mass media and discuss on these forums.

Habermas identifies the deformation of the public sphere by the parallel advances of social welfare, growth of cultural industries, and the evolution of large private interests. For example, large newspapers, who are operating to earn profit, turned the press into an agent of promoting certain agenda; it has become the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere (Habermas, 1962, p.184-187; Deane, 2005, pp. 177–192). Despite his belief that public spheres can be most effectively constituted and managed through dialogue, the act of speech, open discussion, and free debate, he claims that public debates can be persuaded by opinion-forming institutions (178). Herbert Marcuse in his publication on the *one dimensional-man*[24] (originally published in 1964) studies the ideology of advanced industrial societies and analyses the new 'voice of command' used by managers, educators, experts, politicians, media men to translate the arguments into authorized opinions (Marcuse, 1991, p. 245). Such propaganda undermines the sense of mass media as a public sphere because mediated discourse let the people think according to media-set agenda.

Media dominated public spheres such as television, radio, and press control the process of rationalization of ideas according to their set agenda. These manufactured ideas are injected into the minds of the public to make their ideologies; in turn, these ideologies were discussed in common public spheres such as coffee houses, informal public gatherings, among youngsters or the students' settings. Public opinions created at such forums, in such a way, are beyond the rational consent of the public rather influenced by media debates which leads them toward passivity.

Such mediated discourse does not serve democratic political values and does not encourage the metaphor of transparency. Instead, it is a transparency that impede and frustrates the prcess of accountability and hides important information in a mess of manufactured political realities (Vikul, 2016, docsity.com).

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[23] *Media in Pakistan: Between radicalisation and Democratisation in an unfolding Conflict*. The report can be accessed from https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-media-pakistan-radicalisation-2009.pdf

[24] Can be accesses from https://www.marxists.org/ebooks/marcuse/one-dimensional-man.htm

2.4.1 Issues with Mainstream Media Coverage

Moreover, usually, the content of TV programs is censored, planted, structured, and manipulated. Which Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky also discussed in the Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Therefore, young people were relying more on online news sources for news and information about politics and elections rather than traditional media (Saleem et al., 2013; Kohut, Pew, 2008, Internet's broader Role In Campaign 2008[25]; Qayyum and Williamson, 2014; Abbasi, 2020). Side by side television is also criticized on social media venue for broadcasting exaggerated and unnecessary stories of politicians' scandals about their personal lives. Media events, scandals, and other forms of politics-as-entertainment eventually dominate and cover other forms on forums of discussion, transforming this biased communication into public discourse (Vikul, 2012).

Media liberalization came up with the unrestricted flow of news and information but losing journalistic ethics and a sense of responsibility on the part of media organizations (Vikul, 2012). For instance, in Pakistan, just as an example, in 2018 the issue of 'Reham khan's book against Imran khan' got popularity on mainstream media; both electronic and print, and on digital platforms. The anchorpersons of political talk shows on ARY news channel were speaking in favor of Imran khan condemning the baseless blames of Reham khan against Imran Khan to damage his reputation and just two days after this, they started speaking against Imran khan favoring Reham Khan. How does all in all change? This raises a question in the citizens' minds. Such a jump in the media agenda puts doubts in their journalistic credibility. ARY's changing stance has been under discussion on social media platforms.

Political sit-in (Dharna) of PTI in August 2014 against the elected government of PMLN blaming for election rigging in many constituencies and demanding re-polling in these constituencies was a remarkable event to analyze media biases and partisanship. This sit-in continued for 126 days in the capital city of Pakistan. Mainstream media was criticized by many scholars for devoting unnecessary coverage to 126 days long sit-in of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (Mulla, 2017). The other important thing to analyze was the biased coverage of ARY and Geo news channels, as ARY altogether covered it positively supporting the stance of PTI and Geo

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[25] *Internet's Broader Role in Campaign 2008*. Can be accessed from https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/media/Files/Reports/2008/Pew_MediaSources_jan08.pdf.pdf

covered it altogether supporting the stance of Government in all aspects. Such a biased coverage puts the credibility of both ARY and Geo on stake and regards mainstream media as a biased and partial public sphere.

Moreover, the role of mass media such as electronic media (TV and Radio) and the press is critical and should be discussed in regard to the structures of ruling governments. For example, countries with non-democratic forms of government structures, where the information flow is under the heavy influence of government control, face another entirely different situation (A. Yousaf et al., 2012, pp. 74–100). There are different patterns of repression and media censorship depending upon the type of autocratic regime i.e. military, personalist, and single-party regimes (Geddes, 1999). Non-democratic regimes apply censorship on media comparing the benefits and cost of censorship. If benefits exceed costs and the probability of success is high, censorship is increased (Popescu, 2011). It is believed that in non-democratic regimes, autocratic leaders do not have alternative mechanisms to control political structure other than imposing censorship on media and stay in power. Hence it appears to be the most repressive out of all regimes (Linz, 2000). Multiple situations of repression and media censorship can be observed in the case of Middle Eastern political structure. The phenomenon of media network closure by states is fairly common in the region, for example, many journalists have been imprisoned in Egypt and different other restrictions have been imposed on media networks. Similarly, in Iran, during protests in early 2018, social media networks have been closed (Media Freedom in the Middle East[26], 2018).

Similarly, if we look around the political history of Pakistan, Pakistan spent almost 35 years in a non-democratic political regime and all the time there have been personalist regimes. Throughout the history of these regimes, media freedom has been attacked in different ways both in electronic media and the press. Though, before 2003 there has been only national electronic media which always worked as a mouthpiece of government but restrictions in the shape of punishments, and life threats, on print journalists are historically evident (Toppa, 2018, Columbia Journalism Review[27]; Michaelsen, 2011, p. 35). In certain regimes, for example in General Musharraf's regime, even, the transmissions of many television channels were stopped,

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[26] Brookings institution is a nonprofit organization and conducts public policy research on Middle East and North Africa. The article can be accessed from https://www.brookings.edu/events/media-freedom-in-the-middle-east/

[27] Toppa, S., (2018). In Pakistan Can a Bill keep Jounalist Safe?. Article can be accessed from https://www.cjr.org/watchdog/pakistan-journalists-violence.php

an example of media oppression is the movement for restoration of the judiciary (Mula, 2017). In non-democratic and semi-democratic regimes, its freedom has been critical, and dictators tried to snub its freedom of expression in many ways (Riaz, 2014**).**

Censorship has been observed in the content of the programs, the issues to be discussed, the format of the programs, the appearance of the anchors, etc. In this technologically modern era, when information flow is very fast, there are multiple channels to communicate and to be informed and people get awareness through multiple information networks, people do not digest this repression imposed by non-democratic leaders and eventually start criticizing it. As in General Musharraf's regime, during the 'restoration of judiciary movement', media censorship was imposed, though it was for just 2 or 3 months, but then social media had taken over as an alternative platform and a communication medium among the general masses.

The liberalization of media is not a big issue in most of the world now. The ruling governments have been forced to liberalize their media because for many reasons; first because of the demand of democratic regimes through democratic elections, second because of new communication technologies which are another source of information and which have made it more difficult to control the flow of information, third because of the wave of globalization and free trade (Deane, 2005, pp. 179–180). In Pakistan, the government's 'liberalization of media 'policy in Musharraf's regime not only opened up venues for private television channels but also allowed them to broadcast without any censorship. Private television channels have been enjoying the benefits of the liberation policy of General Musharraf since 2003. Now there is a space for independent media debate under the umbrella of liberal media which is supposed to have rational media discourse. Stevenson, (2015) still believes, taking up the one dimension of Habermas's idea of the mediated public sphere, that political communication on television and print media does not have the authoritative appeal of current affairs, the news bulletin, or documentary, yet it remains, at least nominally, an approximate public sphere: a place where political argument – or public rationality take place (1984, pp. 3–5).

However, the transformation of the public sphere in the era of electronic media and press calls for a re-examination of the previous assumptions of participatory culture and freedom of opinion in the process of communication for the new public sphere. If mass media presents unbiased and objective coverage and works on the parameters of journalistic principles, it can promote democratic discourse and can make the government accountable in front of the public.

As noted by Michaelsen in analyzing the role of media in the processes of political change in Pakistan, he concludes

> "Democratic development in Pakistan seems to be challenged by the resistance of the political elite to changes in the distribution of power and wealth; deficits in economic and human development; a significant risk of social conflict; Pakistan has to develop a political culture of rational debate, tolerance, and non-violent conflict resolution. Despite significant progress, Pakistan's media need to continue a path along of professionalization and internal reform resisting current tendencies of sensationalism and political bias" (Michaelsen, 2011).

Therefore, it is concluded that television as a mass medium cannot be helpful in raising the voices of the youngsters. Moreover, television is not an interactive medium and on the platform of television, there is no margin of open discussion where people can gather and make a collective opinion on some national issues. However, I personally assume, that Habermas's analysis, about liberal and democratic public sphere in bourgeois society and then, transformation of the public sphere into media-dominated public spheres with manipulative discourse, has provided a strong theoretical base for this study. And now as it is evident, given the consequence of social movements and the emergence of new information and communication technologies, this global shift has given rise to new social orders and spaces for public discussion to encourage democratic politics.

2.5 New Public Sphere

However, after the advent of social media, public discourse is, supposedly, less influenced by mediated discourse because social media provide opportunities for free speech and freedom of expression of as many political views as there are users on the network, encouraging public analysis based upon any information.

However, this is not particularly confined to only electronic media and press, but social media is also facing some sort of restrictions. But this is also the fact that the authoritarian governments could not have full control over social media as it did with other mass media,

stated Khalid Al-Jaber[28] (Caywood, 2018). This is also endorsed in a report[29] about 'Media use in Middle East' which states that three-quarter middle east nationals get news on their phone and two-thirds of nationals get news through social media every day (Dennis et al., 2015). In Middle East social media emergence has been slow, and even till now there was control over the use of social media, some of the control has been lifted with increasing worldwide pressures of critiques and pressures from inside. But some countries are still facing this issue in using certain applications of social media (Radcliffe & Lam, 2018). Habermas's analysis suggests the same that this control over information starts the unprecedented public debate and the arguable emergence of a fresh kind of public sphere (p.24-25).

New spaces have been formed, independent of government. The spread of more democratic forms of government, the liberalization of media and telecommunication systems, the ensuing proliferation, popularity, and interactivity of the media –all of these suggest a substantial expansion of the public sphere for much of humanity (Deane, p-188). We still needed a powerful public sphere to overcome unnecessary domination by state and where power and domination over public opinion could be criticized. The Public spheres, as James Deane (2005) describes, are a platform to share the point of views and communicating information on political and national issues among individuals and such public spheres have an impact on communication in the society and ultimately on public minds. In a country like Pakistan where mainstream media often give in to pressure to avoid certain issues, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are seen by activists as tools to fight back against such pressures[30] (Tanzeem, 2018). When General Musharraf declared a state of emergency in Pakistan, it badly impacted private television channels in Pakistan, though, for a short time. During lawyers' movement for restoration of judiciary, Musharraf put a ban on the transmissions of 30 television channels which were taken off the air. New information and communication technologies especially social

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[28] Khalid Al-Jaber, director of the MENA Institute and a visiting assistant professor at Qatar University and Northwestern University in Doha. Caywood, C. (2018). *This is How Social Media is used in Middle East*. Article can be accessed from https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/how-social-media-being-used-middle-east-36857

[29] Dennis & Wood (2017) presented their findings about "Media use in Middle East" Fifth Annual Survey by Northwestern University Qatar.

[30] Article can be accessed from Pakistani Activists: Social Media Policies Exploited for Censorship | Voice of America - English (voanews.com)

media got a new space for information dissemination and opinion exchange during this ban (Michaelsen, 2011, p. 49). Michaelsen further endorses the situation that not only in the state of emergencies by military coups but the state of emergencies created by natural disasters such as a devastating flood in 2010, online communication networks and social media were used as an organizing tool for many activities and fundraising (p.53).

Although the news programs on mass media both electronic and press are overly occupied with political news but even then, these are not as popular among young people as is social media because both electronic and print media are not interactive media. Young masses are relying on social media not only for getting news, but it also provides a platform to discuss that news critically, give voice to citizens and provide an opportunity to citizens to take part in discussions like an analyst.

2.5.1 Moving from Traditional to Contemporary Public Sphere

This discussion moves further from traditional to the contemporary concepts of the public sphere. The concept of contemporary public spheres is much different from that of traditional. Habermas originally describes that

> "a public sphere, independent of the reigning governments, was established out of a space carved out in the coffee houses of enlightenment Europe. The public debate over radio meshes with the billions of informal and interconnecting conversations enabled by the new technologies of mobile telephony and the Internet. Information and communication have become impossible to control" (Deane, 2005, p. 181).

In the internet age, to maintain a contemporary view of public spheres which is based on diverse and multiple free views and opinions, there is a greater scope on social media for the public to form their opinion on national and political issues of the country by initiating more liberal, democratic and independent debates (Deane, 2005, p. 187; Ganda, 2014b). Internet access is now available to even poor, struggling and developing nations; internet use continues to spread to all groups of the society, high-income low income, more educated, less educated without gender discrimination, yet there is a difference of adoption in different age groups. As there is an increasing global trend of using the internet and social media[31] (Chaffey, 2016), this is

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[31] The report is available at Global social media research summary August 2020 | Smart Insights

no more an answerless question that 'has social media virtually become the social life of the people'. It's a complete package for a digitally-driven generation (Lüders, 2008).

People from different spheres of life come together through the use of social media and share their views on the topics of their interest and concern. Social media can be used as a platform where both type of people; active and passive, can enjoy connectedness and openness (Jose van Dijck, 2013, pp. 45–46), exchange of views, information, knowledge, and even their personal issues and problems (Valenzuela et al., 2012). Jenkins (2006) perceives the internet in terms of participatory culture and democratization, through which an ordinary user gets empowered and freedom of expression. Social media communication is considered much closer to a user's personal interests and desires.

In order to understand the domination of social media as a public sphere over the other media, we will now discuss, here, (i) technological aspects of social media (ii) social aspects of social media, and (iii) social media audience. These are the distinguishing factors that make it the most wide and popular public sphere among a large number of people.

2.6 Technological and Social Aspects of Social Media

The use of internet and communication technologies catches the attention of scholars to discuss the concept of technological determination in comparison to social and cultural aspects and later many have discussed the relationship of technological determinism with the social aspects of the internet and digital communication technologies. Some are of the view to believe the fundamental concept of technological determinism that social and cultural changes are controlled and conditioned by technological developments (A. Toffler, 1980; Alvin Toffler, 1981). And some have refuted this one-sided relationship of technological determination and society (Castells, 1996; Lévy, 1998).

The scholarship based upon the claims of the proponents of technological determinism demonstrates that any social change in society is driven and shaped by technological developments (Toffler, 1980). Speaking more precisely, the human communicative patterns have been developed by and dependent on communication technology in each era. Today's advanced situation; the modern and fast-moving information society, is the result of innovations and

Chafey, D., (2016). Global Social Media Research Summary.

developments in technology. However, when it is argued that the internet and communication technologies are changing the human communication patterns and structures of society, the aforementioned argument about technological determinism seems to be true. Society is following social and cultural trends with the aid of modern technology (Hauer, 2017).

An optimistic and quite interesting view of this debate is presented by Negroponte; he believes that the technological revolution can not be stopped. Technology is replacing the ways how information is delivered and transferred. In this information age, the global transfer of information, services, and products in the form of weightless bits with the speed of light has an important role to transform societies and cultures (Negroponte, 1996).

In contrast, social determinism states that the social sphere of life is proved as a driving force for technological developments. A set of human behaviors and social interactions determine human actions with the help of cognitive computing sense[32][33] (Mani, 2013; Goguen, 2004) and the introduction and development of information and communication technologies depend on these behaviors. Social interactions have created a requirement for the development and innovations in communication technology. Levy further argues that technology, indeed, facilitates communication among members. For example, in substantial social movements, the technology partly played a role but it was not all, technology just facilitated the communication during these social movements, but these social movements were not entirely dependent on technological developments (1998).

However, I and many other scholars believe that the communicative nature of digital platforms is not possible without technological facilitation, which, today, social media possesses as a medium. As Mahlouly, (2013) states, that the sociological patterns made through online interaction are subject to the technological infrastructure. The expansion of computers, networks, and the internet has changed many aspects of society overall with the changing patterns of human communication which is subject to the continuous development of technology (Hauer, 2017). Many authors believe that it is not the society, which is influenced by technological developments only, but the technological developments are also driven and influenced by society. In the case of digital communication, technology is a material part of human

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[32] Mani, I., (2013). *The living handbook of narratology*. Article can be accessed from http://lhn.sub.uni-hamburg.de/index.php/Computational_Narratology.html

[33] Goguen, Joseph (2004). *CSE 87C Winter 2004 Freshman Seminar on Computational Narratology*. Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of California, San Diego

communication aspects, and the technological and social aspects of communication work together to make human communication possible; they are fostered by each other (Burmeister, 2017; Castells, 1996; Lévy, 1998).

Television by its technological nature is not a discussion forum where people especially youngsters, easily and openly, could participate and discuss the issues of concern, unlike social networks where a topic of discussion may reach millions of people through discussion, commenting, and sharing by network members. Communication on internet flows in a node-link network structure that connects content and users in a globally distributed and integrated infrastructure in which networks have capability to connect its users in multiple dimensions and on multiple levels (Henry et al., 2007).

When a particular media is used, users are dependent on what technology behind that media facilitates them to do. In simpler words, we use 'television as a medium' according to its technological construction; we can not use it beyond what technology construction behind it provides us. Similarly, in the case of the internet and social media, when we use internet-mediated communication, our communication merely depends on the technological construction of the internet. Up to this extent, the concept of technological determinism is potentially applicable; as a facilitator of human communication.

Television 'as a communication medium' can not be used the way the internet is used, because there are certain restrictions and features that limit its users to use communication media like other communication media. Many communication scholars have consensus over the argument that technological features of every medium facilitate certain levels of human communication, but human communication does not solely depend on technology. Human communication was indeed possible and continued when technology was not there. In nutshell, the communication is not dependent on technology but it is facilitated by modern technology. However, there is no argument other than that as the technology progresses, it changes the way we create, produce, distribute, and consume communication content. And this human dependency on technology is increasing with the advances in technological developments. As far as social media communication is a subject matter, social media communication is undeniably dependent on the technology behind it.

Furthermore, these communication technologies also facilitate its users to communicate multiple content genres such as text, animation, audio, video, graphics, etc. Genre mixing is also

very common within individual texts, for instance, a specific blog may combine on one hand political content and on the other hand clicks on ones' private life (Lomborg, 2009, 2011). In the same way, an individual producer of social media communicates through different genres at the same time with different people and different genres at the same time with the same people (Rainie et al., 2012; Rainie & Barry, 2012). Social media content produced by the youngsters in Pakistan is influenced by the characteristics of text, audio, visual, graphics, figures, etc. and the same communicative idea may contain one or the mixture of more than one genre element that is communicated to one or more than one receiver. That is because of the reason that the expansion and long-term sustainability of social media depend upon their ability to attract more audiences and to retain them. Keeping in mind this particular view, more technical features are being added to these applications and are being updated constantly to attract more users and to maintain their level of interest. Consequently, even beyond the updates posted by users' networked friends, social media sites generally update their design every couple of months, simply to keep the user's attention (www.facebook.org). Some of these examples are memory sharing 'On this day' to flashback user's memories of a particular day, 'friendship anniversary', and friendship video with the title 'Friends day', 'people you may know', 'suggested friends', etc.

Social media, as being real-time applications, have the manifestation of being constantly in connection. On both platforms; facebook and twitter, users communicate with their friends' networks in real-time, without any delay in communication. In this online communication, the transfer of information is fast and is also oriented by instant feedback.

Social networking websites (SNS) such as facebook, blogs, and microblogging services like twitter collectively constitute social media. These are, in fact, technological frameworks or communicative templates which are facilitated by some service provider (Lomborg, 2014) which, in turn, facilitate communication. Everyday communication of Social media is characterized as personal and deinstitutionalized communication (Lomborg, 2014; Lüders, 2008) and beyond professional conventions (Lomborg, 2014). These are not designed for professional use or for a paid job where professional conventions or ethics should apply. Social media is a users' own perimeter in which they work according to their own personal rules and ethics. For that reason, every user uses social media according to his rules and principles and no code of ethics is workable on it. Everyday communication revolves around personal interests, routine activities, experiences, picture sharing, social and political likes, and dislikes to create a sense of

togetherness among the members of a networked platform. Networked structures of social media facilitate users to interact one-on-one, one-on-many, and many to many bases. Second, deinstitutionalized communication means that communication messages are not produced within the institution and have no distinction between producer and receiver. Social media communication is an interpersonal communication based on the personal expressions of ordinary users. On social media, consumers are in direct control of their social media feeds. They have the power to limit and expand their social networks. Facebook provides an environment where friends' networks move like a tree that multiplies on every next level ahead. And with this structure, we can better imagine how information on facebook travels and spreads.

2.6.1 Producer-Text-Audience Model

A key concept of the public sphere is a sphere or a platform where people have got empowerment in freedom of expression in terms of selection, consumption, and distribution of the content. Social media is characterized as user-generated content and users as producers; the concept of the producer is connected with social media user empowerment (Lomborg, 2014), and termed as participatory culture and democratization in which ordinary user gets power (Jenkins, 2006). However, the scholarly discussion concludes that empowered producers, collectively and individually, are involved in knowledge production (Burns & Meek, 2015). In the case of social media, everyone has equal access to the means of production and distribution. For example blogging software are available easily with minimal network operator's fee and other social media such as microblogging website like twitter and social networking websites like facebook, are accessible to everyone whether any professional or any individuals. Social media, for its popularity, is more dependent upon the participation of users through the production of content by them. Having citizens' participation in the production of content illustrates their ability to judge and analyze the content and to set the criteria for what to produce. It involves a long list of content topics; their routine activities, display of social gatherings, promoting particular political agenda, range of users' moods, creating content for any civic or political campaign. Such texts pass through ongoing development and continuous revision and they may change their style, form, and scope through some variations of text over time as many users consume it and then reproduce and transform it leaving their own expressions on it. Social media communicative content as a genre is more dynamic and unstable as compared to other mass media content.

Social media genre may be expected to exhibit more dynamic and unstable genre patterns because a larger and more diverse number of producers and audiences are in direct dialogue making feedback instantaneous (Lomborg, 2014, p. 28). Based upon Lomborg (2014) and Lüders (2008)'s analysis about social media concept as deprofessionalized space, we reach to the conclusion that this is a platform where ordinary users have as equal and easy access to the means of digital production and distribution as media professionals are supposed to have. In one way, social media such as Facebook and micro blogging services have been used for professional purposes in politics for political campaigning, and candidates' publicity, and on the other way, the content produced for professional facebook pages or other social media is taken and reused after editing, changing, and molding according to an individual users' personal liking and disliking.

It is also very important to understand the relationship between media texts and media users in the terms of media reception, to analyze media usage patterns, and how we make sense of these media texts. Multiple genres of media text activates receiver's social and cognitive capacities including particular genre knowledge and use of relevant genre in a particular situation considering the requirement of communication genre. Given that social media text is editable, going through a continuous process of development, change, addition, and subtraction, it makes its users more active and meaning-making agents with critical rational thinking (Livingstone, 2003, 2004, 2012)**.**

Social media have provided such an environment to ordinary users where they can feel themselves a part of the national political process, which they have been missing for decades before the invention of Web 2.0 and the popularity of social media (Z. Ali et al., 2013). In politically destabilized societies, the internet's ability to engage ordinary users to generate and distribute content on a public platform, which is independent of any pressure and without any professional gatekeeping, becomes a point of concern for political and state authorities (Lomborg, 2014). In a country like Pakistan, social media enhances the capacity of ordinary people to raise a voice as citizens in public debates on issues like corruption, election rigging, the performance of ruling governments, eligibility of electoral candidates, despite the fact that social media has been criticized for being extra vocal by different political parties off and on but freedom of expression could not be snubbed.

I take into account an example of government accountability through the pressures of public consensus on social media from the Pakistani media perspective. Dawn leaks issue was one of the major and chronic institutional issues in Pakistan's civil-military relations. The issue erupted when 'minutes of the highly confidential meeting between military and civil officials on national security plan' leaked and published in a leading newspaper in October 2016. Just after the publication of Dawn leaks, political crises emerged because of the sensitivity of the issue, and soon the matter was under discussion on mainstream media. This 'The Dawn' news story was discussed intensively by all media and it created a rift between civil-military relations. On the government part this issue, as it was a matter of national security, should not be leaked out and on the media part, Journalistic ethics of social responsibility demand that this story should not be published. Although, after the publication of the story, both aspects of 'Dawn Leaks', one, what the story is, and second, who are the 'responsibles' to leak the minutes of the highly confidential meeting of civil and military officials were discussed on mainstream media. Further, it was due to social pressures by the citizens who demanded strict action against the culprits through social media expression that the government had to fire its information minister, Senator Pervez Rashid. Dr. Ijaz Hussain, in an article, says that Sharif government was put on trial both publicly and legally, due to public pressure on social media[34](Hussain, 2017).

According to the concept of mediated public spheres, Habermas while arguing for transformation of the public sphere, states that "public opinion" shifts from rational consensus emerging from the debate, discussion, and reflection to the manufactured opinion of polls or media experts. But In contrast to this, in contemporary public spheres that emerged with the advent of the internet and social media, public opinions are formed as a result of rational debate where public discourses take place. Smuts (2010; 2012) studied the phenomenon "Social Networking Sites as a New Public Sphere: Facebook and its Potential to Facilitate Public Opinion as the Function of Public Discourse" and endorses the above discussion.

2.6.2 From Personal Relations to Networked Relations

Studies showed that anger and anxiety as emotional states of heightened physiological arousal are key forces in driving social transmission and diffusion (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

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[34]   Hussain, E., (2017). Civil-Military Relations Post–Dawnleaks. Can be accessed from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318876208_Civil-Military_Relations_post-Dawn_Leaks

The Role of SNS in bringing such psychological satisfaction in an individual's minds is the key factor to judge the level of effectiveness of communication processes through SNS. Other factors such as prior or existing political interests and peer group effects are also studied as the intervening variables in mobilizing youngsters politically by many scholars (Sinclair et al., 2013; Teresi, 2012).

As of Pakistan's case, people of Pakistan are suffering from preconditions such as fear created by insecurity and law and order situation in Pakistan, anxiety because of uncertain economic and unemployment conditions, and anger due to mal-practices, corruption, and wrong-doings of the Government. The extremity of these emotions, such as anger, reinforces participatory actions i.e. social and political movements (LeDoux, 2012; Valentino et al., 2009) and in an ideal situation, which help members of these movements to force the establishment and the other actors to take some action against wrongdoings and to bring the change in the society (Manuel, 2012). This virtually networked society gathers and comes into action in the real-world and tries to trigger the actions of the real world. Issues discussed online through any social media take up the form of a campaign because of the communicative structure of social media, as the content which is shared with friends is then shared by friends to their friends, and this way a single content is multiplied. This proliferation of content initiated by citizen journalists or online activists for the cause of awareness about corruption, tax theft, human rights violations, etc. makes it a campaign (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012, p. 364).

The political interaction helps them gratifying the dissatisfaction which arises as a result of national problems like poverty, unemployment, economic depression, terrorism, etc. Talking about the networked social movements, Castells termed it as the 'Space of Autonomy' because of its nature being free and independent space of communication for networks (p.222). He clearly explains that the social and political movements are facilitated by social media communication for the sake of social and political change, as happened in the case of the military coup in Turkey. Despite that military took over state-run television, satellite communication link, and other institutions, Erdogan made advantage of social media and used facetime to communicate his first message. Afterward, he tweeted to his 8.6 million followers and posted on facebook. His messages were then picked by his followers and sent through WhatsApp and facebook's live broadcast and twitter's periscope app to each other making it a nation-wide demonstration.

Just by being able to observe each other's information and behavior, social media provides an environment to its users to feel more closely attached to each other (Cummings et al., 2002; Ellison et al., 2007; Golder et al., 2007; Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). Reinforcing the point of view given above, James Deane states that the Internet is the most decentralized, adaptive, and interactive technology in existence, and its use historically by civil society has been a core component in the growing influence of civil society in recent years (p-187). Bakardjieva discussing the internet in everyday life puts her views in the mainstream, she explains that due to the intervention of technology, new dimensions are added to the spatial, temporal, practical, and social arrangements of everyday life (Bakardjieva, 2011). Moreover, the internet is the first medium for common people, mediated everyday communication mainly through social media which creates a sense of 'connected presence' (Licoppe, 2004).

An upsurge has been observed in the use of social media in the previous few years. Most dominant, as the data show, are facebook and twitter and they have constituted a much wider public sphere as compared to the real public spheres which are taken in spatial meanings. However, the traditional public spheres always require the physical appearance of people, people should be gathered at one place physically but social media as a public sphere provide an opportunity to the public where people can be gathered without being physically present and can create virtual identities and maintain their relationships on social media (Gündüz, 2017, pp. 85–92).

2.7 Marginalization of Voices and Free Speech on Social Media

The idea of the use of social media as public sphere work particularly but not exclusively in those countries where marginalization from public debate and a lack of voice in democratic decision-making have the most immediate and severe consequences (Deane, 2005). Marginalization is a term used when certain voices and the debates of the public are considered undesirable and unwanted and are excluded from the decision-making process by the authorities (Iris Marion Young, 2001). Habermas characterizes third-world countries or developing nations for marginalizing their common people from the decision-making process (Reyes, 2010, pp. 142–163). In such a situation, people have less control over their lives and less right to exercise the resources which are available to them. When individual voices are suppressed, they adopt the shape of the collective voice of people and it creates severe consequences like distress, anxiety

depression because of unheard voice and unfulfilled desires. Passing half of the time from its birth in dictatorship and the rest in such a democracy which is ever struggling for its survival, Pakistan has been suffering from many national issues, such as economic deprivation, poverty, corruption, unemployment, illiteracy, worst law and order situation and lack of access of voice of a common man to the authorities. Pakistan has also been facing barriers in a free flow of executing political processes and transferring democratic regimes.

In such a scenario, the young masses of Pakistan adopted social media for free expression of their political views without any censorship. In Pakistan, social media has never been under any type of government control since its advent. As a political forum, social media provided an opportunity to the young masses for using them as a public sphere for discussions. Furthermore, because of the popularity and the expansion of social media among youngsters, social media has been used for certain social and political causes and to protest virtually against some social and political evils.

On the platform of social media, we collectively used to be social, that's why it is termed as social media, contrary to the other mass media such as television and newspaper. Social media is the direct facilitator of peer-to-peer communication, and 'celebrity to a fan', 'a fan to a celebrity 'communication (Lüders, 2008). But all uses involve its supreme quality of being interactive and interpersonal (Lomborg, 2014). Moreover, immediate feedback is also one of the central aspects of the social media communication in contrast to the other media such as television or newspapers; which makes this communication far more effective and result-oriented.

However, it has already been discussed that the notion of free speech is also one of the other major characteristics that, according to many scholars, are associated with public spheres like coffee houses, cafes in older times. People gathered at public spheres may discuss their individual opinions on national or political issues without any pressure or fear. That is why an independent collective opinion about political and national issues was built after the execution of a public debate. Social media are also such a platform where people from different backgrounds, ages, ideas, and thinking are gathered and discuss their individualistic ideas, thinking, and opinions. Political discussions are one of the major topics which are discussed on social media. People enjoy a free atmosphere in sharing individual opinions at the social media platforms due to its unrestricted form for communication (Amedie, 2015).

Edgerly et al., (2010) gave the idea of usability of social media as a public sphere. He asserted that YouTube can be an influential player in the political process and that it can serve to politically mobilize young people. Diverse nature of comments and argument indicate that YouTube can provide space for public discussions. The role of facebook and twitter among all other social media is accepted as where everybody has the right to have his or her voices heard and assist in democratic issues of importance (Loader & Mercea, 2012; Velasquez & Rojas, 2017). Now more than 2.7 billion monthly active members throughout the world use facebook, making it the most popular and biggest public sphere worldwide (Facebook, July 2018; Statista.com, 2020[35]). Moreover, the democratic nature of facebook and other social media, as they carry no social differences among members of social media platforms, has made them a broader public sphere. The use of social media as the public sphere is now majorly seen in reference to political discussions and democratic political participation. Political workers use this public sphere to mobilize the youngsters towards a special political cause and the youngsters use social media to share their political ideas and beliefs among their friends and colleagues on routine bases.

2.8 The Effects of Like-minded Views, Bubble Filters and Democratic Sphere of Social Media

The first aspect of the research about the political expression on social media and its democratic consequences in the presence of freedom of expression of political discourse has been studied and discussed through previous literature. Now I will discuss the other counter aspect of political expression on social media and its democratic consequences in the presence of filter bubbles, the echo chamber of like-minded people, and silence.

Though, many scholars also studied people's motivation to resist disagreements and cross-cutting arguments, so as trying to limit political expression. Social media offers such algorithms, which filter cross-cutting views (Pariser, 2011). Additionally, users of social media themselves have access to features of unfriending and unfollowing friends on the network, which have dissent in views (J. H. Yang et al., 2017). In Eco chambers of like-minded people, not only

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[35] Global Digital Report 2020 published on smartinsights.com, and statista.com
- The number of internet users worldwide in July 2020 is 4.57 billion, up 7 percent year-on-year
- The number of social media users worldwide in 2018 is 3.80 billion, up 9 percent year-on-year

that similar point of views are circulated and reinforced by the members of online communities (Sunstein, 2001, mentioned in Masip et al., 2019), but also, dissimilar views are discouraged and thrown out which limits the scope of freedom of expression (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Vicario et al., 2016). This raises many concerns about social media's role as a democratic space for people's political expression. Just being a public sphere does not confirm democratic consequences as we know that these virtual spaces can also be manipulated despite the seemingly free flow of political discourse. In the context of social media, 'Deliberative democratic discourse can prevail only if network users are exposed to the multi-dimensional, divergent and convergent point of views', and these point of views can influence others' opinions which seems to be a myth as far as Sunstein (2001), Bennett & Iyengar (2008) and Vicario et al. (2016)' s arguments are concerned. But this is merely one aspect of social media communication, the other aspect carries more convincing arguments; the human behaviors are assumed a bit more inclined towards partisanship even in offline spaces, which relates to the concept of group identification; people want to be identified by affiliating themselves to a specific group (Greene, 1999). Second, the other psychological aspect is that people are susceptible to welcome or accept and sometimes, do not welcome or accept divergent and opposing opinions, whether online or offline, because of the affective and cognitive components of attitude formation (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Eagly & Chaiken, 1995). Third, friends' network on social media is composed of members from different social spheres of life; colleges, universities, offices, relatives, neighbors, etc. which produce the divergent and multi-dimensional point of views and may have different partisanship or even neutral mindset. It becomes very difficult to resist, a lot of incoming feeds having different opinions on certain issue, due to social bonds and affiliations, which results in versatility in political expression. Fourth, an individual social media user is bombarded by hundreds of posts and tweets every day and to meet the requirements of postmodern society, we respect individual's self-expression and choice (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), and eventually our self-expression and choices are also respected by others. This conceptualization of mutual respect of choices and opinions clears the path for acceptability and adaptability. Generalization of the contemporary self is characterized by ever willing to change and adapt the conditions for change (Giddens, 1991). Fifth, Brundidge (2010) argues that social media users accidentally come across to the information which has the different and cross-cutting point of views, though, we don't actually need or look for it. Several

studies emphasized the effectiveness of accidental exposure of information on the political efficacy of individuals in the political process (Lane et al., 2017; Valeriani & Vaccari, 2016).

Based upon the aforementioned conclusion, we understand that, even in the presence of bubble filters, the echo chamber of like-minded people, silence or discontinuation, all this does not altogether change the position of social media in the efficacy of political discourse via political expression. Online public spaces are public spheres used by and for people, not the spaces of hegemonic professional filters of media organizations or journalists (Masip et al., 2015, 2019).

2.9 Conclusion

The ongoing study builds on the notion of social media as a facilitator of public discourse, equality in participation, and freedom of expression. The characteristics of the public sphere based on the early concept of the public sphere discussed by Habermass include equal accessibility and free, independent, and liberal expression of views. However, his notion of the eighteenth-century public sphere faced criticism for not being equally accessible to everyone. According to Kelner, while discussing bourgeois public spheres, Habermas ignored the plebeian, proletarian, and women public spheres. Bourgeois public spheres were not equally accessible to everyone and critical public debates were not initiated by all members of the society equally. However, my rationale is, that today social media is considered as the virtual public space, which is more wide, viable, accessible, and flexible for every kind of user and where politically sensitive subjects are openly discussed and dissent could be expressed. Public spheres have always been considered as the place of collection of vigilant and vibrant people where things and matters of public concern are discussed and rose to the political authorities and have an impact factor on the decision-making process. I explored the concerns through the examples of mainstream media discourse and social media discourse from the political and social setup of Pakistan.

Use of social media as a public sphere for youngsters serves in many different ways (i) It allows its members to construct their public profiles within the structure of social networking sites (ii) it provides an opportunity to make a list of unlimited friends whom they can share a realm of common connectivity without formal leadership or control over the distribution of information (iii) in recent time it serves as an open forum where they can discuss and share their

views on political and national issues freely without facing any pressure. Moreover, the literature on 'social media as a public sphere' also concludes that social media encourage maximum participation of individuals in democratic political discourse and the political process of a country.

Building the basis of this study on the theory of democracy, I intend to evaluate the implication of the substantial components of Dahl's Theory of Democracy; enlightened understanding of the issues, voting equality, and equal and effective participation, in the light of social media as a facilitator of public discourse.

Chapter 3. Political Scenario in Pakistan

Pakistan is suffering from a lot of national and political issues since its independence e.g. poor economic conditions, poverty, unemployment, insufficient health facilities, law and order situation, illiteracy, corruption, and unstable political regimes. Pakistan has been under a dictatorship for almost 35 years at different times from its birth (Nauman Hayat et al., 2016). Since then, the people of Pakistan have been revolving around non-democratic regimes and weak democratic regimes. And, the leaders, of even so-called democratic period, have not been concerned about resolving its issues like poverty, unemployment, inflation, etc. With these poor conditions, the youth had become pessimistic and had lost hopes of its betterment and hence the participation of youth in national politics and their political role in elections have been passive.

Pakistan has been governed by military dictators three times. The first military takeover was by Mohammad Ayub Khan from 1958- 1971 and the constitution of Pakistan was suspended. The second military regime started in 1977 until 1988 by Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq and the third time, Pakistan was governed by military dictator Pervez Musharraf from 1999 to 2007 (Schofield, 2002). In all three military regimes, the military has been ruling over Pakistan for longer periods leaving weak democracies behind (Grant, 2004; Decades of military rule[36], Dandc.eu, 2018). Consequences of the military takeover were faced in the shape of the deteriorated development process, isolation from the world, and uncertain economic conditions. Though, Pakistan did not enjoy better economic conditions even in democratic regimes also (Nauman Hayat et al., 2016). Since the independence of Pakistan, the commencement of elections and the democratic political regimes have been irregular. It is generally believed that economic conditions cannot get better in the presence of unstable political conditions in the country, and instability creates when there is uncertainty in the political situations (Mamoon et al., 2017). Throughout the history of dictatorship, freedom of expression has been controlled in many ways. Dictators do not tolerate disagreements and criticisms that's why they usually try to control what people say and in this way, the voices of citizens cannot reach the ruling authorities. These dictators always suppressed the voice of people desiring general elections and whenever required, electing the representatives of their choice through manipulating the election process. Another example of barriers in freedom of expression was media censorship. The media is

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[36] Decades of Military Rule (2018). Article can be accessed from https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/brief-history-military-rule-pakistan

brutally attacked at different times and in different regimes of dictatorship. Apart from non-democratic regimes, we did not even witness any peaceful transition of one democratic government to another democratic government until 2008.

Second factor which did not let its internal conditions better is the authoritarian ship of the democratic leaders which is even more dangerous than the evident and apparent dictatorship. Feudal lords in Pakistan put influence over the political system of Pakistan and ultimately its effects on election results can be observed. The feudal system, linked with the ownership of agricultural land, exists in rural areas of Pakistan. Feudal lords in Pakistan force the people, who are under their influence, to vote for their favorite political party or political leader so rupturing the democratic traditions. The feudal system both, directly and indirectly, affects the political system of Pakistan, as many feudal landowners can be seen in the parliament of Pakistan.

Unfortunately, democracy in Pakistan has been unsuccessful in fulfilling the expectations of the people and political institutions could not run with true democratic spirit. Corrupt political leaders and weak political structures made responsible for the deterioration in the country and thus, democracy could not flourish in the country. Many mal-practices in the political system of Pakistan are observed such as pressures of political leaders on state institutions, horse-trading for the selection of state designations, nepotism, corruption in developmental projects and many other forms of corruption (Nauman Hayat et al., 2016). Foreign policy journal[37], based upon transparency international perception about corruption, states that a significant correlation is found in corruption scores and state's instability (Foreign policy, 2006, quoted in Khan, 2007). Corruption and wrongdoings of the elected governments have destroyed not even Pakistan's democratic political setup but due to these evils elected governments have also been incapable to provide people's basic needs of life, resulting in national and political instability in the country (Khan, 2007).

Political leaders and political parties when come into power they put pressure and try to control state institutions for their own benefits. Democratic leaders did not pay attention to resolve national issues such as energy crises, unemployment, inflation, health, and education, because their self-interests have priority over state interests. Politicians' personal offshore companies and their foreign bank accounts show their selfish behavior and least concern for the

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[37] 'Foreign Policy' is a news journal of the United States foreign policy establishment focuses on global issues, published the original Helman and Ratner article. Along with its affiliated think tank, the Fund for Peace, Foreign Policy has compiled an annual 'Failed States Index' since 2005 (Foreign Policy, 2006) retrieved from (Khan, 2007).

betterment of the internal conditions of Pakistan. Weak political structure and wrongdoings of the civilian governments is also an excuse which dictators use to justify their unjustified military coups and argue that disability of the civilian government forced them to use military power and take over the government and that they can better run the state affairs (Riley, 2014, p. 100).

Third factor which did not let the democratic system flourish in Pakistan is the caste and biradri system of Pakistan which affects election results. Caste and biradri system is just like a tribal system based upon classes of society that has collective values, living styles, and rituals. In caste and biradri system, the people belong to specific social communities. People do not and cannot change their cast and biradri and it remains the same from generation to generation. This social system is operational in resolving 'inter-caste and biradri' and 'intra-cast and biradri' social issue such as minor and big disputes, among the members of particular biradri and between the members of two different biradris, at local and regional level especially in the rural area (M. Ahmed, 2008; A. G. Chaudhry et al., 2014). The influence of caste and biradri can also visibly be noticed during elections and in election results (Usman et al., 2017; Waqas & Khattak, 2017, pp. 9–11). People cast their vote on the bases of their caste and biradri, they cast vote for the candidate of their own caste and biradri. Heads of the particular caste and biradri, which are called 'Choudhri' and 'Numberdar' are usually influential on the members of that caste and biradri and the members of a particular caste and biradri cast their vote on the directions of their head (M. Ahmed, 2008, pp. 45–56; Akbar Leghari et al., 2020). When a political candidate, who belongs to a particular caste and biradri, contests in the elections, the majority of the members of the same biradri cast their vote in favor of that political candidate. However, the caste and Biradri system is not that influential in the urban areas because of the literacy level and the increased political awareness of the voters (Usman et al., 2013, pp. 107–126).

These social structures of the communities also play an important role in the party's 'selection of electoral candidates' for local bodies and general elections (Waqas & Khattak, 2017, pp. 9–11). Such political practices, where individual opinion has no value and is suppressed by the authorities and the political candidates are elected on the basis of their affiliation with specific caste and biradri rather on their own personal and political character, have distorted the real face and the spirit of democracy. Such practices also put barriers in individual citizen's participation in the political process of the country.

3.1 Major Political Parties in Pakistan and their Election Campaigns

Pakistani politics is mainly an interplay of three national-level political parties; Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-N (PMLN), and Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Although, there are many other political parties also but these are not recognized as national-level political parties, their horizon is limited to provincial level politics.

3.1.1 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was founded in 1996 by a famous Pakistani cricketer Imran Khan. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did not contest election 2008 and boycotted the election suspecting its fairness and observing many irregularities in election 2008. In election 2013, PTI started a new arena of political campaigning by excessively using social media for the election campaign and it is believed that youth voters were more mobilized in these elections as compared to the previous election held in 2008, which is evident by the demographics of election results[38] (Shahid, 2012, Dawn.com; ECP[39]). In election 2013, PTI emerged as the second largest political party in reference to the number of voters and the third largest in winning number of constituencies. PTI's political campaign was dominated by the use of digital media and PTI's social media team used the power of digital media at its best to achieve the goals of their party and what was best for their party. PTI's campaign was glittered by the slogan "Naya Pakistan" (New Pakistan) on social media. Even this slogan was also excessively used in offline campaigns like imprinted on T-shirts, flags, Stickers. The rise of this party and its leader is attributed to the estimated 30 million young Pakistanis who voted for the first time and second, the advent of social media (Saifuddin Ahmed & Skoric, 2014). Salman Raza[40], who is the deputy creative head of PTI's social media, said that PTI started using this active platform from the very beginning as our support base mainly consists of youth who are active on social media (2018).

PTI was the first who used social media for their election campaign and tried to mobilize people of every age group, but their campaign's specific focus was on the youth population. The social media, which were mostly used in the political campaign of elections 2013 and 2018 in

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[38] Shahid, A., (2012). Election 2013: the youth factor. Article is available at https://www.dawn.com/news/718682
[39] Election Commission of Pakistan is constitutionally established independent federal body which is responsible for organizing and conducting elections in Pakistan.

[40] Salman Raza is the admin of PTI's web portal and deputy creative head of PTI's social media team.

Pakistan, were facebook.com, twitter.com, and blogs. The content included party information, candidates' information, party mandate, and the party's point of view on different national and political issues. Twitter's hashtags on party claims and blames such as #PTIforever and #WeWantImranKhan and also focusing on the other national issues which Pakistan was facing such as corruption in mega projects, literacy, power crises, and other unfulfilled expectations from the previous governments.

PTI's claim for their marginalized coverage on mainstream media such as TV and Newspapers forced PTI to organize social media teams to use it for election campaigns and also motivated its supporters to use this platform to express their points of view. Though, positive and negative propaganda has been observed in these election campaigns. Such propaganda was initiated through comic cartoons, animations, and textual jokes on facebook pages and twitter accounts, regardless of whether it was done by the party's supporters or by paid social media team members. These social media political propaganda campaigns also carry "attack messages" on opposing political parties and political candidates. Attack messages were in any form whether text, picture, or video having a tone of political satire in it targeting personal and political scandals of politicians and political parties. The purpose of these attack messages was to defame an opponent political party or the political leader.

PTI appeared as a rising political power in Pakistani politics during the election of 2013. It made extensive use of social media, especially, facebook and twitter in the campaign of election 2013 and then in 2018. Twitter, a different kind of social media other than the facebook, is actually a micro-blogging service, which facilitates vertical communication flow. Especially, in the case of politics and election campaigns, it facilitated high profile political figures to communicate one-on-one with their supporters, voters, and critics. Not only the PTI but this trend of using social media in election campaigns was also followed by other political parties to promote their political agenda. PTI has one official twitter account and four facebook official pages. Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan is the most popular leader on the micro-blogging website Twitter in Pakistan with his 912.8 million followers. After Imran Khan there comes another PTI leader Asad Umer with 6.9 million numbers of followers on twitter (Twitter.com, 2020).

Another effort made by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to gain political benefit from social media uses especially facebook, was during PTI sit-in protests in 2014. This sit-in protest was

organized against election rigging by the winning party, which successfully formed government after elections. PTI's social media team and active members were directed by PTI officials to use social media to motivate people to participate in PTI sit-in and to achieve intended goals[41] (Dawn.com, 2014).

PTI, who took a step ahead of other political parties to use social media for politics, should be given the credit for uplifting Pakistani youth through the use of facebook and twitter, from a virtual political environment to the real political environment as it was evident after the election sit-ins by PTI for election rigging against the government (Alvi[42], 2011, PTI).

3.1.2 Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N)

Pakistan Muslim league-N is believed to be a conservative political party in Pakistan. PML-N was originally founded as Pakistan Muslim league during the election 1985 by military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. The very first time in 1990, PML made government under the leadership of Nawaz Shareef. The two-party political system of PML-N and PPP has been dominating Pakistani politics from 1988 to 1999. After the military coup in 1999, PML split into two parties i.e. PML-N headed by Nawaz Shareef and PML-Q headed by Shujaat Hussain. Nawaz Shareef remained the chairman of the party PMLN until he has been disqualified by the Apex court of Pakistan on corruption charges. After the disqualification of Nawaz Shareef, his younger brother Shehbaz Shareef became the chairman of the party. Party's chairmanship remained within Shareef family.

Though PMLN's political campaign has not been prominent on social media before the election 2013 but during election 2013, PMLN likewise its other rivals also started an election campaign through social media. Election 2013 was the first election in which not only the PTI but the old giant PMLN, PPP also turned on social media for political election campaigning. The reason, seemingly, would be that to capture the attention of more than 32 million facebook users and 3.5 million twitter users for their participation in elections (PTA, www.geo.tv, 2018). However, this is also the fact that PMLN has been engaged more in traditional campaigning methods using mainstream media. The election campaign coverage to PMLN was given more on

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[41] Aamir, Y., (2014). *PTI asks workers to use social mediat o sustain sit-in*. Article is available at https://www.dawn.com/news/1130405

[42] Dr.Awab Alvi is a member of social media team of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

mainstream media as compared to the other political parties. As PTI claimed for being marginalized on mainstream media during the election campaign of 2013. PMLN has also been highest in spending money on the election campaigns in the form of political advertisements (Statistics collected from the Election Commission of Pakistan, 2013, 2018).

PMLN's social media team was developed in 2012, soon it realized the power of social media and by 2013 it had eight official pages just on facebook. Party's urban workers were readily accepting the idea of using social media, but the resistance has been faced from rural workers. They did not completely realize it as a strong communication tool for election campaigning, says Saad Saleem Malik, a member of PMLN social media team[43] (Shaukat, 2013, tribune.com.pk). PMLN's social media campaigning got momentum just 90 days before the election 2013 when the caretaker government was in. Atif Rauf, the head of PML-N's social media team says that 'our thousand-member social media team' is busy day and night trying to create and shift public opinion in favor of PML-N (2018). The daughter of former Prime Minister, Maryam Nawaz is taking care of her party's social media team and making use of social media applications for political communication in an organized manner. It can also be observed that before election 2013, PMLN and party leaders were not massively involved in social media political communication, but in between 2013 and 2018 a shift in social media engagement can be seen. Maryam Nawaz comes third in terms of the number of followers on twitter with more than 5.7 million followers (Twitter.com, 2020).

3.1.3 Pakistan People's Party (PPP)

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was founded under the chairmanship of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto at its convention at Lahore in 1967. PPP is a left-wing political party and the founding principal of the party was the application of socialist ideas establishing social and economic justice. PPP first time formed its government at the end of 1971. After the execution of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, her daughter Benazir Bhutto was elected as the chairperson of Pakistan People's Party. PPP formed government two times under the chairpersonship of Banazir Bhutto. Banazir Bhutto was assassinated in a terrorist attack in 2007. After her assassination, her 20 years old son Balawal Bhutto Zardari became the chairman of PPP. It can be noticed that the Party's headship remained within Bhutto family from generation to generation as in the case of PMLN.

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[43] Shaukat, A., (2013). Electioneering: The people behind the parties' online persona. Article is available at https://tribune.com.pk/story/544938/electioneering-the-people-behind-the-parties-online-persona

Pakistan People's Party established its social media team in 2008 after coming into power as the result of the election 2008 (Aroosa Shoukat, 2013, tribune.com.pk). It can be seen that Pakistan people's party also took part in the social media political campaign, not before the election campaign of 2013.

PPP leaders initially resisted the use of social media for political campaigns even in the election campaign of 2013. The party's leadership had a minimal presence on social media but then they realized its importance and the campaign continued on social media (Aroosa Shoukat, 2013, tribune.com.pk). The party now has two official facebook pages and one twitter account.

Just before the election 2013, the party realized the power of this new medium to some extent and organized a social media team. As a whole, political parties could not avoid ignoring it as this new medium is taking over the traditional media for political campaigning to some extent, says Frahad Jarral, a member of PPP social media team. (Shaukat, 2013, tribune.com.pk). Chairperson of the party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has 4 million followers on Twitter (www.twitter.com, 2020). Asifa Bhutto Zardari and Bakhtawer Bhutto Zardari, the daughters of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and the sisters of party chairperson, are also using twitter for political purposes, although they both don't possess any party position. The first time the election 2013 witnessed the social media election political campaign by almost all national-level political parties. Social media is taken as "an uncertain world" by the politicians of Pakistan in elections earlier than elections 2013 (Rizvi[44], technologyreview.pk). But during the campaign of election 2013, all national political parties were using social media though not in greater intensity. But then, this practice of using social media for election campaign continued with more intensity and in an organized way in elections 2018 also. Social media team members and supporters of political parties take the advantage of the social media election campaign which continued even after the deadline of the Election Commission of Pakistan for stopping the campaign 48 hours before elections. This is indeed an edge over traditional media's election campaigns.

In Pakistan, political structures of political parties or even individual political candidates are based on inheritance. Many political candidates inherit their political positions from their

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[44] Jawwad Rizvi is Senior Economic Correspondent at *The News*, a leading English Daily. An online article retrieved from www.technologyreview.pk

fathers, mothers, or close relatives with few exceptions. With their political position, they also inherit political power, influence, followers, and voters.

Professor Lieven[45], writing about the politics of Pakistan, expresses the same thoughts in his book 'Pakistan a Hard Country (2011)'. He further talks about democratic political leaders as

> *"Democratically elected leaders can be considerably less honest and more authoritarian than military despots since all of Pakistan's "democratic" political parties are "congeries of landlords, clan chieftains and urban bosses seeking state patronage for themselves and their followers" (Lieven, 2012).*

Benazir Bhutto Ex-Prime Minister and Ex-Chairperson of PPP inherited her party position from his father, then after her assassination her son took over the chairpersonship of the party. Similarly, after the disqualification of chairman PMLN Nawaz Shareef, his brother Shehbaz Shareef took over his party position and became chairman of the party.

Summarizing, during election 2018 in Pakistan, almost 35 million people were using facebook, more than 75% were between the age group of 18-24. Almost all mainstream political parties of Pakistan including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q), and many others have also been using facebook during election 2013 to increase their fan count by posting their day to day activities and their remarkable work done.

3.2 Politics and Media Partisanship in Pakistan

In Pakistan, many media organizations are operating multiple media outlets, the most dominating among them are Express media group, Jang media group, Dunya media group, ARY, Sama, 92 news, etc. Media's role in politics has been very controversial throughout the history of Pakistan. The affiliations of media with different political parties in different times have been observed. Moreover, in non-democratic and semi-democratic regimes, its freedom has been critical, and the dictators tried to snub its freedom of expression in many ways.

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[45] Anatol Lieven is a professor of International Relations and Terrorism Studies in the War Studies Department of King's College, London, a former journalist and an author. He is the Author of 'Pakistan a Hard Country' originally published in 2011.

Media organizations are not directly or indirectly owned by political parties, but political parties have, somehow, influence over the media organization. More or less, the Pakistani private media is inclined towards different political parties for different reasons, including their financial interests or their relationships with different political leaders. It can be observed through its historical analysis that these affiliations have been subject to change in different regimes, for example, it is evident that the Jang group has its affiliation with political party PML-N during their regime from 2013 onward, which in turn has been suppressing its freedom in late 90's and both PML-N and the Jang group were having hostile relationships in the past. Further, the effects of these affiliations and influences can be observed through their news coverage and anchor's words of mouth. Moreover, the government and the other political parties give incentives to journalists in the shape of money, residential and commercial plots, and foreign tours. In this race ruling political party has an advantage because a major portion of media organization's revenue comes from advertising and the ruling political party bans government advertising to that media that speaks against the government (International Media Support[46], 2009). And the media organizations who take the benefit of government advertising speak in the support of government (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2020). This situation is the same for Pakistani print and electronic media. Such influences and pressures put barriers in the coverage of news media for fulfilling their sensitive role in sustaining democracy in Pakistan. Advertising has always been used as a strong weapon by the ruling governments to have control over media organizations. The government uses this 'weapon' to achieve the desired goals and eventually, the flow of government advertisements always remains towards the media organizations that favor and support the government policies and decisions (Bátorfy & Urbán, 2020). As a result of government advertising, the media organizations can't resist government pressures in any way. Media organizations and the journalists give positive and maximum coverage to the government policies, projects, ceremonies, and even do not highlight government wrongdoings and corruption scandals (Moholi, 2015).

Media partisanship can clearly be noticed in 2014, in the political sit-in (dharna) of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf accusing the ruling government of election rigging. This sit-in continued for more than forty days and the coverage of these forty days by different television

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[46] *Media in Pakistan: Between radicalisation and Democratisation in an unfolding Conflict.* The report can be accessed from https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-media-pakistan-radicalisation-2009.pdf

channels and newspapers showed the real faces of the media organizations. The mainstream media covered the activity of Dharna (sit-in) of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf differently as some television channels and newspapers gave huge coverage while some others gave moderate or low coverage. Even a layman could identify this biased coverage of media. Moreover, some television news channels showed the positive aspects of Dharna and some television news channels and newspapers showed the negative aspects of PTI Dharna. Jang media group was favoring the government and opposing PTI Dharna and others mainly ARY was clearly in favor of PTI sit-in against the government (Bilal et al., 2018).

Pakistani political parties with the help of mainstream media try to build public opinion in favor of them. Nevertheless, in the disguise of neutrality, the media, more or less, has been acting as an agent for these political parties. Media people like reporters, anchors, sub-editors, editors, and even owners do not feel any hesitation in doing a subjective approach (Riaz & Taj, 2017).

As far as national electronic media is concerned, it is totally operated by the government and the national media cannot speak against the government. But for private media organizations, the situation is a little bit different; they are not under government control in such a way as the national media is. Hence, the role of media cannot be examined considering one aspect and ignoring another; however, in general, its role has been favorable towards the ruling political party to avoid any conflict with the government. Through historical analysis, it can be concluded that governments, almost throughout the world, try to suppress and have some sort of control over media (www.fair.org). According to an internet article, the media-government relationships in U.S are.

> *"Despite the claims that the press has an adversarial relationship with the government, in truth U.S. media generally follow Washington's official line. This is particularly obvious in wartime and in foreign policy coverage, but even with domestic controversies too* (www.fair.org).

It can be understood that the question of freedom of the press can also be under discussion especially in developing countries such as Pakistan. Because at the end of 90s, there have been very critical relationships between the ruling party of PML-N and the Jang media group, and because of such relations Jang media group suffered from lots of financial crises like

lack of advertising revenue i.e. the government stopped giving advertisements to Jang group media organization.

Similarly, there can be noticed a. apparent variation in the role of media and its freedom in the time of conflict. Nevertheless, the coverage of political issues in the media in reference to authoritarian and democratic political systems has been different. In the case of the internet the level of suppression in authoritarian regimes may be different as compared to other media, but still, there are certain restrictions which governments used to apply. Such as in 1999, when General Musharraf took over the regime, he tried to undermine the media's role by imposing black laws for media. Many television channels have been forced to stop their transmissions for months.

3.3 Cross-media Ownership in Pakistan and Political Consequences

The phenomenon of cross-media ownership is also another reason why audiences are moving away from these mainstream media and trying some other forum. Cross Media ownership is the title ascribed to individuals and groups who hold and exercise control over multiple media outlets. In Pakistan, there are no restrictions applied on having more than one media outlet, and in Pakistan, now they have become media groups, at the same time having more than one television channels and side-by-side newspapers also. This is the reason that they not only have control over information but have also established a monopoly within the sphere and are able to earn huge profits out of it.

The objectivity of electronic and print media both is becoming potentially questionable. The coverage of the issues of political and national interest demand care, fairness and self-control. Cross-media ownership, somehow, is in the interest of political elites where there exist influences of political parties and political candidates over media organizations and their policies (Di Mauro & Li, 2009). Sarkar (2013), in an internet article, considers cross-media ownership a threat to a vibrant democracy. Big media organizations and conglomerates are influential on what is heard, read, and watched, and on the other hand what is selected, published, and distributed (Sarkar[47], 2013, 'Cross-media ownership- A threat to vibrant Democracy'). And

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[47] Shivaji Sarkar is a National Secretary with the Indian Media Centre. Online article retrieved from https://www.vifindia.org

because a small number of conglomerates owning multiple news outlets results in lesser information and entertainment sources for audiences since a diversified ownership structure will have an enhanced potential to provide a wider range of opinions, values, and attitudes (Brown, 2000)**.**

Chapter 4. Methods and Materials

4.1 Introduction

Given that the research design was based on data collection, the statistical interpretation and analysis of the collected data, and secondly, as it was about investigating the relationship among main concepts of the study, the researcher followed a positivists approach for the objective findings of the study (Crowther & Lancaster, 2008). The empirical part of this study is based on quantitative research methodology with the aim to contribute to existing knowledge of the topic in the context of Pakistan. The study focused on social media usage patterns among university youth, particularly emphasizing political communication with reference to youth's political expression on social media and the level of their participation in the deliberative political process of Pakistan. Political mobilization of university youth of Pakistan is determined through different conceptual stages: in the first stage the youth's level of political awareness through social media has been established, and at later stages, social media's role in (2) changing traditional voting behavior, (3) online political participation and, and (4) offline political participation of university youth of Pakistan was determined. However, the main research question which was under investigation is *"Is the intensity of political use of social media among university students in Pakistan associated with the political mobilization of the university students in Pakistan?"*

The quantitative research method based on survey research was used to get responses from the university students of Pakistan to get to know the social media usage patterns and political communication behaviors of university students. Many other researchers have also used the survey method in the fields of political science and communication studies in order to get better insights into youth's political communication behaviors (Breuer, 2012; Khalifa, 2011) and to generalize results. The results of the study have been given and explained in two ways: descriptive and inferential. In the part of descriptive results, variables of the study are evaluated on the basis of the distribution of responses such as frequency, mean and standard deviation. These statistics helped to evaluate major trends in social media political usage patterns (both in Facebook and Twitter use), demographic differences in social media use, facebook and twitter's political expression, etc. Further, according to the purpose and nature of the study, which was mainly to determine the association between social media political expression and political

mobilization of university students, and to test the relevant hypotheses, inferential statistics were used (inferential statistics are presented in the following chapters).

Following is a brief explanation of the sampling method and sample size to conduct a survey from the student population of universities of Pakistan.

4.2 Sample, Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The survey data were collected from the youth of age from 18 to 25. This age group was taken to get responses because most of the university students of Bachelors and Masters educational level are of this age group. According to the education system in Pakistan, most of the students start the 13th year of their education at the age of 18-19. Similarly, most of them graduate at the age of 24-25. Additionally, 18 years is the minimum age limit to register for casting vote during elections, and the students of bachelor and master fall in this age group.

Since the study focuses on youth's media usage patterns, the university youth from all four provinces of Pakistan was selected as the population of this study. As outlined in the introduction, one of the reasons to focus the study on university students is that university students are more prone to online technologies and use social media more frequently than other young people. In addition, the focus is based on the argument that the habits formed at an early age are more sustainable and life-lasting (Bode et al., 2014; Gerber et al., 2003; Valentino & Sears, 1998). Therefore, I built solid grounds to study the communication behaviors of university students with special reference to Pakistan.

In total, five leading universities were selected from Pakistan's four provinces; one university each from the provinces of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, and two universities from the Province of Punjab. The province of Punjab has almost double the population as compared to all other provinces, making 50% of the total population of Pakistan (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Therefore, two universities were selected from the province of Punjab for the collection of data, so that the representative sample of the university students from each province can be ensured. The University of Punjab Lahore (Punjab), Government College University Faisalabad (Punjab), University of Karachi (Sindh), The University of Balochistan Quetta (Balochistan), and The University of Peshawar (Khyber Pakhtunkha) were five public sector universities selected for the survey.

The sample was divided into the students of six departments; the department of Mass Communication, the department of English Literature, the department of Sociology, the department of Mathematics, the department of Chemistry, and the department of Physics from the faculty of social and life science and the faculty of physical science. These sampling measures were taken to minimize sampling error.

Sample Size: Responses from 150 respondents, 25 respondents from each department, were collected from each university making 750 responses from all over Pakistan. This sample size (total 750) was included in the analysis eliminating erroneous questionnaires. Based on the findings of the pilot testing of the questionnaire from students, it was noted that some students left the whole questionnaire unfilled (around 7%), some students left questions with missing values (around 4 %) and some students filled the questionnaire even without knowing what the question is about (around 4 %). Based on these results, 15 % extra questionnaires (100) were given to students in addition to the actual number of survey respondents, to eliminate unfilled or partially filled questionnaires.

A mixed-methods sampling (i.e. a combination of sampling techniques) was used. The sample was initially divided into four clusters based upon provinces. In the second stage, the clusters of academic departments were determined. Six departments were selected through simple random sampling. Further, the desired sample from every six departments of a university was selected through simple random sampling.

The sample of university students was homogeneous only in terms of having similar access to the internet and familiarity with social media. Other demographic components used as control variables; gender, age, educational level, family income, academic department, province, and political partisanship, were used to capture the effects of demographic variance in measured variables i.e. the variance in the use of social media among male and female, among the students of different departments, among the students of different provinces, among the students of different educational level (primary level of university students and secondary level of university students). The selection of a heterogeneous sample helped me to generalize the results to all university students.

4.3 Survey Method

To test the hypotheses stated in this study and to answer the research questions, I made use of the survey research method for the collection of data. The survey research method was used to collect data from respondents with the aim to know which specific expression or expressions they prefer to consume and produce through social media for political communication. The tool for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was distributed among the university youth of Pakistan.

The survey was conducted in the English language and almost 75% of the questionnaires were distributed among university students in the university setting. The rest of the questionnaires were sent online and the responses were collected online[48].

To have more response rate and to attain the validity of data, the researcher personally visited the University of Punjab Lahore, Government College University Faisalabad, the University of Karachi, and the University of Peshawar. For getting responses from some departments, the mediators from the departments were also involved. This activity also helped me to get a 90% response rate. However, recalling the memory of social media use was important, subsequently, the respondents were asked to review their previous facebook and twitter activity and to fill the questionnaire accordingly. For example, to respond to questions such as *'How many political posts (average) in a week you receive containing political context'* or *'How many political posts (average) in a week you posted or shared on facebook',* reviewing their facebook and twitter log was essential. The administrative department of every university was contacted to get formal permission to get access to the students.

In the online version of the questionnaire, the option 'require' was enabled, meaning that the respondents cannot move on in case they leave blank responses in the questionnaire.

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[48] Due to Covid-19 crises, on 20th March, 2020 all educational institutions including public and private sector universities in Pakistan had been closed. Researcher had to leave the university of Karachi in the mid of data collection process. The data from two universities was still to collect. After coming back to the residence place, the researcher prepared online version of the questionnaire, arranged mediators from each mentioned department of the universities to contact their students, trained the mediators for data collection and finally got rest of 25 % responses online.

4.3.1 Mediators Training for Data Collection

Due to financial and time limits for the phase of field research, it was difficult to collect the data from the far most areas of Pakistan by myself. To counter this issue, the mediators from different departments were asked to accomplish the task within time. The mediators were lecturers from the relevant departments of the universities where I could not manage to go. Before the task was assigned to the mediators, they were trained to comply with the guidelines of filling the questionnaire so that any type of biases could not hinder the fairness of responses. A separate online training session was arranged for each mediator to pass on a clear understanding of the data collection process.

4.3.2 Field Experiences during Data Collection

As a result of this 75% self-led endeavor, I got vast learning experience, reaching the uncompromised quality of data in a resource-constrained and challenging environment. I remained in the field for almost two months to distribute the survey questionnaires and to get them back from almost 570 students of four universities (150 from Government College University Faisalabad, 150 from the University of Punjab, 150 from the University of Peshawar, and 120 from the University of Karachi) in three provinces of Pakistan. For the rest of the 180 respondents from the University of Balochistan (150 responses) and the University of Karachi (rest of 30 responses), mediators (existing lecturers) were assigned with and trained for the task. The main task was to organize the students from each department separately (six sessions with 25 students each; one session of one academic department) and to motivate them to participate in the study. Most of the students were found to be very cooperative; however, some students were reluctant to participate, so that in the end, some were convinced to participate in the study and others preferred not to. Respondents were suggested to review their facebook and twitter communication activity for the last few days to answer some questions. Even though the questionnaire was self-administered, support was needed to motivate the respondents to complete the questionnaire and not to leave blank spaces throughout the data collection process.

4.4 Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire is used as a data collection tool for several reasons, (1) I was concerned to know the youth behavior, their perception and preferences regarding facebook and twitter

communication, (2) collecting data from 750 respondents was a tedious job, as for large sample size, and (3) to timely complete the fieldwork, the best possible and suitable way to collect data was to use questionnaires as a data collection tool. This tool has been used by several academic and non-academic researchers for data collection in their studies (Boulianne, 2016; Breuer et al., 2012; Gil de Zúñiga, 2012; Teresi, 2012; Ahmed, 2012; Pew.org)

4.4.1 Content Validity

Before I constructed the data collection tool, it was substantial to make the content valid. A lot of explanations can be found on the subject matter, but a simpler account of content validity is as *the degree to which a measure's items represent a proper sample of the theoretical content domain of a construct* (Drost, 2011; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), i.e. the items used in the questionnaire should measure full domain of a construct and should be relevant to the measuring construct.

To ensure that the content or items selected for the measurement of political mobilization are valid, the research has been passed through different procedures of content validity. These procedures are explained below.

4.4.1.1 Previous Relevant Literature

Previous literature has been explored to underline major concepts that were subject to consideration in different researches in the fields of political science, communication studies, and media studies. I selected relevant studies from these disciplines and went through them systematically to deeply understand the concepts of political communication through social media which lead to the political mobilization of students. To study the previous literature helped me to finally figure out the major and most relevant concepts to measure and analyze political mobilization through social media. The major categories, related to political mobilization, taken out were: political expression on social media, political awareness through social media, changed voting behavior, online political participation, and offline political participation.

4.4.1.2 Textual Analysis

The other procedure to ensure content validity, through which I passed, was the textual analysis of facebook posts and twitter's tweets to observe actual facebook and twitter activity of students.

To analyze the political role of social media, it was necessary to first analyze the content which is selected, shared, and discussed on social media platform by youngsters. For this purpose content analysis through textual analysis of facebook's political posts and twitter's political tweets was conducted. Social media websites keep a log of activities and interactions which their users perform on the site. The data from the log can be used to get significant information about the patterns of the political use of social media in routine by users. One purpose of this analysis was to collect preliminary data, another purpose was to know the concepts related to this phenomenon for solid grounds for the actual study. This phase was accomplished in a number of ways by exploring the following:

1.   Official facebook pages of political parties and twitter accounts of the leaders of political parties of Pakistan were analyzed. This analysis helped me to know the patterns of how political information is delivered by political parties and the behaviors that are adapted by their followers to process political information.

A total of 100 tweets were collected through systematic random sampling to avoid a large body of data, to make the analysis workable. 25 tweets of each of the following politicians were considered[49]: Imran khan, Maryam Nawaz, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Asad Umer, Asifa Bhutto Zardari. Specific themes that they discussed or talked about in their tweets were noted.

Similarly, 100 political posts from official facebook pages of political parties were collected and their content was analyzed. These facebook pages were 'Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (Imran Khan)',' We love Nawaz Shareef, Shehbaz Shareef and PML(N)', 'We want Imran Khan to be the next PM','PMLN daily videos' and 'Pakistan Peoples Party-PPP'.

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[49] All mentioned politicians are the prominent leaders of all national level political parties and have a large number of youth fan followers.

2.   In the next step, students' facebook accounts were explored for textual analysis. However, these accounts cannot be accessed without users' permission and social media websites do not provide such allowance even to researchers to access users' data. To access the data, I sampled 25 students randomly from one class each in the above-mentioned departments. After describing the purpose of the study that I am interested to know how students are making political use of facebook and twitter and after necessary negotiations with sampled students, I was added as a 'friend' in their friends' list with all possible permissions. The other step which was requested to take was to make their profiles public so that I could see their previous political activity. This enabled me to see their social media activity and their interactive behaviors, i.e. shared posts and comments, keeping in mind their reservation of being observed. In the next step, I randomly selected 10 shared posts from each participant's facebook log, amounting to 250 posts in total. Some of the posts were mutually shared by more than one participant of the study. In this scenario, only one such post was selected from one participant's log to study the major concepts.

3.   Given that, a very limited number of twitter users were present in one class; a voluntary sample was selected to analyze the major political concepts used in twitter political expression. Meaning thereby, whoever used twitter, and was willing to participate, was selected for the preliminary study. A total of 23 students (twitter users) participated in the preliminary study.

The main purpose of this activity was not to measure and analyze the participants' actual online and offline political participation level, but rather to observe the minor themes and topics of discussion which were used as a routine political expression with their friends. In addition, the responses of participants' friends in the form of comments and their general impression in the form of pressing 'like' with or without commenting were also of great help in determining and figuring out political topics of discussion. For example in the response to a participant's political post, one of his friends commented with an 'attack message' about the corruption scandal of the participant's favorite political leader, the other friend was discussing the development condition of the constituency where the political candidate was contesting in elections. In a nutshell, this initial study helped to identify the smaller topics of discussion related to major categories of

online and offline political activities. These smaller topics of routine discussion among facebook and twitter users were then used to construct the questionnaire.

Screenshots and descriptions of randomly selected posts and comments on these posts are given below.

Figure 4.1& 4.2 Screenshots of Facebook political posts and relevant comments

The snapshot placed on the left side is the shared post by some facebook users and on the right side is the snapshot of the comments box. The comments which are translated and described below are underlined in the figure above. This post is about criticism of current Prime Minister Imran Khan that he did not meet the expectations of voters. In response to this post, someone commented by an attack message stating that Ex. PM Nawaz Shareef and Ex. President Asif Ali Zardari were accused of corruption and making their money out of government projects. While another member commented that the voters of the previous Government were sleeping for years as they didn't protest on its wrongdoings.
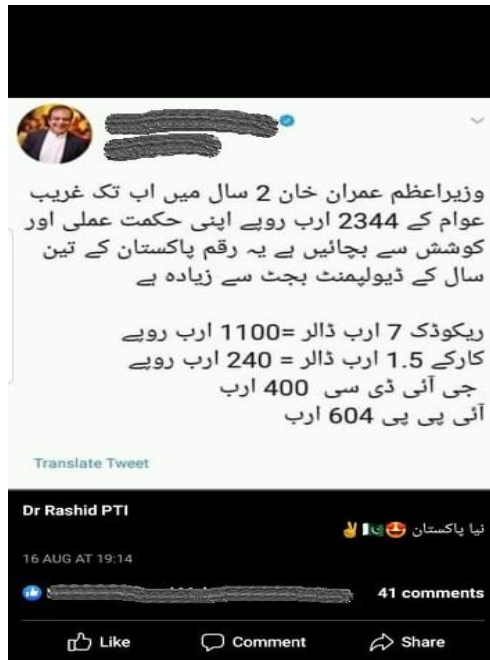
Figure 4.3 Screenshot of Facebook political posts

Figure 4.4& 4.5 Screenshots of comments on Facebook political posts

The post on top is the actual post shared by a facebook user, the two snapshots below show the comments of other facebook users.

This post was shared by a supporter of the current government, describing the achievements of his favorite political party in terms of revenue generated. In turn, his facebook friends are saying (translated comments have been underlined) that if a lot of revenue is generated then why can its effects not be seen on common people's lives. And the other one is supporting by saying that Imran Khan is not making illegal money as the other political leaders have been doing.

This textual analysis of facebook's political posts and twitter's political tweets actually helped me to breakdown complex constructs that were used in the study and to design the questionnaire upon these minor themes. This textual analysis was also helpful in exploring both general and specific political interests of facebook and twitter users. However, it was not possible to address the exact online and offline political actions related to major political activities just based on self-observational data. This was accomplished by going through the actual facebook and twitter activity of students and it was the only solution to address minor level online political actions that belong to major online and offline political activities.

Given that, I was not interested to know their updated and most recent political discussions, the biases, and pretense in their political discussions and content was out of the question.

4.4.1.3 Focus Group

Two focus group sessions were organized each comprising one hour of duration. Ten students both males and females were randomly selected from different departments and were invited to participate in each session with a different list of students. I attempted in each session of the focus group to get an exact understanding of the group members' points of view about their political discussions on facebook and twitter and its real-life implications on their political participation or what they think can better contribute to political mobilization generally. In addition to that, the discussion also included all possible online and offline political participation activities from the students' point of view. This effort to conduct focus group sessions allowed me to get to know the students' point of view about their political participation behaviors in a more direct and natural setting.

Concluding above, multiple procedures were adopted to understand the complex phenomenon of political mobilization i.e. first, systematic study of previous literature, second, the textual analysis of tweets and posts of politicians and students, and third focus group sessions. This activity did not only helped me in understanding the major concepts of political mobilization but it also helped in understanding minor topics of discussion related to these concepts. Further, these variables were used to design the data collection tool 'survey questionnaire' for the empirical part of this study. A set of questions related to each of these variables were asked from the respondents. For example, while analyzing *Awareness through social media,* questions that were formulated were awareness about the electoral process, corruption scandals, personal scandals, performance of political parties, and validity of SNS content.

4.4.2 Questionnaire Development

The empirical part of this study solely depended on the collection of data through a survey. A self-administered questionnaire was designed including open and closed-ended questions and was employed following the theoretical background based on relevant previous literature, the textual analysis, focus group, and meetings with colleagues and professors. The finalized dependent variables included were political expression, political awareness, change in traditional voting behavior, online political participation, and offline political participation. In addition, social media use was taken as an independent variable, which was also part of the questionnaire development.

Finally, a set of questions for the measurement of each of these variables was constructed. Each part consists of a different number of questions. For example, social media use, alone, was divided into two subparts; namely the general use of facebook and the general use of twitter. A total of 6 questions were constructed to measure social media use, mainly, including a five-item scale with statements such as *'How much time do you spend on social networking sites in a day'* and *'Social media use is part of my daily routine activities'*.

The questions about the purpose of using social media, the length of their friends' list, followers and followings, university students in their friends' list, and frequency of their use in terms of 'how many days' and 'how much time' were included to measure social media use. Items and the scale for the measurement of facebook use, twitter use, political use of facebook, and

political use of twitter are adapted from (H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016) in addition to some by myself. A measuring scale for all questions about general social media use, facebook use, and twitter use was designed based on previous studies (Bode, 2012; H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016).

Similarly, the variable 'political expression' was measured including 6 questions. To measure political expression, the main focus was on respondents' political use of social media. The questions were included about their facebook memberships of political parties, the following of official twitter accounts of political parties, and political leaders. Questions such as *'How many political groups or pages have you joined on Facebook'* and *'How many political characters do you follow on Twitter'* were measured on a five-point scale (1) None (2) 1-2 (3) 3-4 (4) 5-6 (5) More. The scale was adapted from Yang & DeHart (2016) and Valenzuela et al. (2009).

To know the effectiveness of social media in transmitting awareness, I constructed certain survey questions that inquired whether social media have been successful in disseminating knowledge and awareness about politics, political process, political candidates, and parties. To test the hypothesis *Social media political expression is associated with the political awareness of university students,* a set of questions about the electoral process, corruption scandals, personal scandals, performance of political parties, and the validity of social media content was designed. This set of questions, measuring political interest, political information and knowledge, and political discussion, was made part of the whole questionnaire. The survey questionnaire consists of 5 questions to test participants' awareness level such as *'Through the use of social media, you came to know about the corruption scandals of political parties'* and *'Generally you got some new information about your opposing political party through Social Media'.* All questions of this part were measured on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree) and some questions (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always) adopted from Ahmad et al. (2019), Barnidge et al. (2018) and Khalifa Ahmed (2011).

I employed certain survey questions to test the hypothesis *political expression on social media is associated with the change in the traditional voting behavior of university students in Pakistan. A* set of questions about voting preferences, their willingness to cast their vote, the role of political partisanship in voting, the role of family pressures, caste/biradri pressures, and role of

peer group pressures was designed. A set of 5 questions as part of the whole questionnaire. Some items were adapted from other studies (Jorik ter veer, 2013; IPSOS Public Affair Voting Survey, 2018) and some were self-structured items based on the socio-political context of Pakistan. All questions have the same measuring scale, but some of them are reversely coded to track the respondents' bias due to exhaustion.

The next part of the questionnaire was designed to measure the respondents' level of online political participation. A total of 7 questions were made part of this section of the questionnaire. The respondents' level of online participation was explored by asking questions such as *You invited your online friends for political meetings* or *You posted texts, pictures or videos of any political party, etc…* In a nutshell, respondents were asked to rank their level of participation in a number of mentioned online political activities. Most of the questions about online political participation were designed based on the items previously developed by Ahmad et al. (2019), Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014), and Yang & DeHart (2016) with the addition of some new items by me.

The last part of the questionnaire was designed to measure the respondents' level of offline political participation. A total of 5 questions were developed in this section. The respondents were asked to rank their responses on a five-point Likert scale (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always) and some questions (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). The respondents' level of offline participation was explored by asking questions such as *'You made offline appeal to others to vote for any political party or leader'.* Moreover, questions about attending political meetings, speeches, wearing caps, shirts with party flags, etc… were also part of the questionnaire. In all of these questions, the respondents were asked to rank their level of participation in a number of mentioned offline political activities. Some of the questions about offline political participation were also designed based on the items previously developed by Ahmad et al. (2019), Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014), Valenzuela et al. (2012) and Willnat et al. (2013) with the addition of some new items by myself.

All questions were written in the very simple English language and were culturally specific, easily readable, and understandable so that they could be easily understood by the university students of Bachelors and Masters in Pakistan.

4.4.3 Face Validity

In order to control the potential effects of reading comprehension, language, illogical questions sequencing, questions relevancy to the constructs of the study, the scale used in the developed tool, unnecessary and irrelevant items used and of any missing items, several procedures of Face validity were adopted. In its simplest explanation, Face Validity is *'the degree that respondents, experts and/or users judge that the items of an assessment instrument are appropriate to the targeted construct and assessment objectives'* (Allen & Yen, 1979; Anastasi, 1988; Hardesty & Bearden, 2004).

Face validity ensured the assessment of whether the items used in the data collection tool (i.e. in the questionnaire) were appropriate to produce the desired results. A large degree of the agreement through face validity procedures was essential to proceed with the constructed instruments. The items used in the questionnaire must reflect what they are intended to measure and must be relevant to the measuring variables. The mostly used criteria which many authors, in the relevant fields, have suggested is to have experts' opinion on the developed tool and pilot testing from a group of people among the population.

After the assessment and comments from (1) experts in the relevant field (Professors and Colleagues) about which items to be retained and which to be removed, and (2) from students about the pilot testing of the data collection instrument, the proposed adaptations were made and incorporated in the questionnaire. This effort was made to ensure the validity of the data collection instrument so that it fulfills the purpose it was constructed for.

4.4.4 Pilot Testing of Questionnaire

After the experts' opinions on the developed questionnaire and the incorporation of their comments in the questionnaire, its appropriateness was checked through conducting a pilot testing of the developed tool. Pilot study helps in identifying risk areas; it gives warning about the inappropriateness of research instruments and whether the research protocols are followed (E. R. Van Teijlingen, 2018; E. van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). For the main part of this study, pilot testing gave me an idea of where the loop wholes were and helped me in identifying any malicious and ambiguous items which may create problems during the survey or which may be

problematic to survey respondents. I employed pilot testing of the data collection tool 'questionnaire' before the main part of the empirical work 'survey ' was conducted.

I distributed the developed questionnaire among a total of 50 students randomly selected from different departments (7.5 % of the sample size). The questionnaire was comprised of 83 open-ended and closed-ended questions and was self-administered. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire in order to make sure whether all questions were clear, readable, topic-relevant, understandable, and culturally and morally suitable.

4.4.5 *Reliability Measure-Cronbach Alpha*

After the questionnaires were filled, I fed the responses of all questionnaires into SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) and checked the internal reliability of the tool. Since the data collected through the survey was used further to draw conclusions about the whole population, it is inevitable to check the data's reliability for the sake of generalization.

In quantitative research designs, Reliability shows the ability of a data collection instrument to produce consistent results. Cronbach's Alpha measures internal consistency, i.e. how well an instrument measures what it is designed for. For example, it measures the reliability of the scale used for measuring variables and sees if the appropriate scale is used for the measurement of these variables. For the measurement of complex variables that cannot be directly measured, Cronbach's Alpha's value tells if the scale will measure the variables of interest.

A high value of Cronbach's Alpha means high internal consistency. For the practical application of any data collection tool, the reliability of the Cronbach alpha should not be less than 0.7, which is considered as the minimum acceptable value for a tool to be reliable (identified by Cohen et al. (2007). The way the data collection tool was designed in this study fulfills the conditions of reliability: SPSS calculated the value of the coefficient of reliability 'Cronbach Alpha' 0.92, which indicates a high level of reliability measure. Hence the coefficient of reliability indicated that the tool can be used for fieldwork implementation and that the results can be used for statistical analysis.

4.4.6 Limitations with Questionnaire

Not every question about the online political discussion was typically successful in answering in a correct and satisfying manner, because it was difficult to recall the in-depth online discussions which took place in the past. Secondly, it was also difficult to recall whether any specific political discussion took place. Instead, a survey may ask respondents how often they *discussed* politics or any specific political action they shared with someone in their social network.

Given the limitations that it was not possible to measure the political mobilization of students over a period of time for this research, I relied on measuring one time data under many control variables (Gender, Age, Study Level, Department, Province, and Political Partisanship). The purpose of including these control variables was to establish that the studied effects were potentially due to social media's political expression, not due to some other factors (control variables).

However, the model included many of the important variables, having observational values, that are/ could be widely used as control variables that can affect dependent variables.

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Data Cleaning and Feeding to SPSS

After conducting the survey successfully and having the data in hand, the next process was to make this data sensible and useful and to make it fit for statistical analysis. Reliable and valid analysis can only be ensured when the collected data is accurate and properly cleaned. That is erroneous, incomplete, empty and logically not matching questionnaires were removed from the collected data. There is no one procedure or one rule to clean the data. In the present study, multiple approaches i.e. a combination of statistical and non-statistical methods, were used to make the data appropriate for analysis.

4.5.1.1 Blank or incomplete questionnaire

As 15 % more than required responses were collected from the respondents, the foremost step was to remove the questionnaires from the collected ones which were

1.   left completely unfilled, e.g. the respondents left the whole questionnaire unfilled, they kept the questionnaire with the intention of filling it but returned unfilled.

2.   Some questionnaires were removed which did not qualify the criteria set for the respondents. For example, a questionnaire was filled by a respondent whose age exceeded 25. Or especially in the online survey, the questionnaires filled by respondents from departments other than those selected in the study were also excluded.

3.   the questionnaires in which most of the spaces were left blank were also removed from the collected questionnaires. For example, a respondent filled the first two parts of the questionnaire properly and left all the next parts of the questionnaire unfilled. Such types of only partially filled questionnaires were excluded.

4.   filled with repetitive responses. The questionnaires which were wrongly filled or filled with nonsense responses were also removed from the collected questionnaires, for example, a respondent marked the option of 'Strongly Agree' throughout the questionnaire, another respondent marked the very first option in each question regardless of what it was asking and so on.

5.   The questionnaires with multiple inconsistent responses and multiple poorly filled cheater questions were also carefully identified. For example, a respondent was not a twitter user and he didn't respond to the questions about twitter usage, but in the rest of the questionnaire, he responded to the questions about political communication through twitter. Multiple inconsistent responses made a complete questionnaire invalid. For a few inconsistent responses in a questionnaire, a cushion of being distracted temporarily was given and were not removed from the accurate questionnaires. Some cheater questions (the questions having the same meaning but asked in different tones) were also added in the questionnaire on different locations. It was possibly nonsense to actually fill these questions *'Political content shared on social media is true, fair'* and *'Political content shared on social media is exaggerated'* with the same response because the direction of their responses was opposite. This was accomplished by making multiple such combinations and then reviewing each questionnaire on the basis of these questions. However, a questionnaire was fully removed only if a lot of such inconsistent responses were found.

4.5.1.2 Missing or Blank Spaces

The valid questionnaires were filtered from raw data by undertaking certain measures which have been discussed above. However, there were still some questionnaires that had a few missing spaces. Very deep and careful consideration was required to fill these missing spaces so that filling the missing spaces may not temper the actual results. Individual questionnaires were reviewed and checked if missing values had connections with other questions in the questionnaire. In this case, missing values were filled on the basis of their connecting questions. An example of such a missing value question is that 'do you use any type of social media' was left blank by a respondent but in the rest of the questionnaire, all questions related to facebook use were filled very consciously. This indicated that the missing response was not deliberately left. Hence, the response was filled by me. Many other such questions were also identified in many questionnaires and were filled after making sure that the questions were not deliberately left missing.

Many of the questions whose responses were conditional to another question's 'yes' response, were left blank consciously by the respondents. In this scenario, these questions were filled through SPSS by the option 'Recode into different variable'. The other missing values which could not be identified were also essential to fill for statistical analysis and so they were coded '0' by 'replace missing values' on SPSS.

4.5.2 Data Coding

The next phase, before the analysis of the collected data, was feeding all data into statistical software. All possible responses to every question (closed-ended) were coded with assigning them numerical values. I entered all the data into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) with its detailed coding scheme depending upon the requirement of the measurement of particular questions.

Three types of five-point Likert scales were used for the measurement of different questions throughout the questionnaire. Numeric codes/ labels were assigned to signify each response in a question, e.g. for questions like *'You argued with your family members to vote for certain political party'* and *'SNS discussions have proved effective in changing views on political issues'* five-point Likert scale was developed and '1' was assigned to 'Strongly Disagree', '2'

was assigned to 'Disagree', '3' was assigned to 'Neutral', '4' was assigned to 'Agree' and '5' was assigned to 'Strongly Agree'. It is noteworthy here that the questions in which the frequency of doing a particular act was asked to be ranked from the respondents, were designed on another type of five-point Likert scale (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always). However, in the questions about respondents' online political participation such as *'You invited your online friends to attend any political leader's procession'* and for respondents' offline political participation such as *'You bought or put on campaign shirts or caps of your favorite political party',* the code '1' was assigned to 'Never', '2' was assigned to 'Rarely', '3' was assigned to 'Sometimes', '4' was assigned to 'Often' and '5' was assigned to 'Always'.

In the third type of five-point Likert scale category, for questions such as *'Your interest in information about politics, election and government during election'* '1' was assigned to 'not at all', '2' was assigned to 'Slightly interested', '3' was assigned to 'Somehow interested', '4' was assigned to 'Very interested' and '5' was assigned to 'Extremely interested'.

For some of the questions such *as 'Have you made any facebook page for political purpose during election'* and '*Did you cast your vote in election'*, 1' was assigned to 'Yes', '2' was assigned to 'No', '3' was assigned to 'Neutral'. The possible responses (data) of all questions were measured on a nominal scale and ordinal scales. In the case where a respondent may have selected two or more options, each option was then separately coded as '1' for 'Yes, '2' for 'No', and '3' for 'Neutral. For instance, while asking the question *'What are your major interests for using social media',* the respondent had the choice to select two or more than two options. The given options were (1) Entertainment, (2) Chatting, (3) Social relations, (4) Information, (5) Politics, (6) Sharing your routine activities. Therefore, in such questions, every response was treated as mentioned above. Each of these options was coded as ('1' for 'Yes, '2' for 'No' and '3' for 'Neutral).

Coding of Social Media use

'Social media use' is the independent variable and it is measured with cumulative indices of 'Facebook use' and 'Twitter use'. Students' use of social media is measured by intensity, frequency and density of use (Skoric et al., 2016; Wirtz et al., 2017). For example the question *'How many friends are in your friends list of facebook account'* was measured with response categories '1' for '1- 50', '2' for '51-100', '3' for '101-150', '4' for '150-200', '5' for 'More

than 200' and the question *'How much time do you spend on facebook in a day'* was measured with response categories '1' for None, '2' for 'less than 59 min', '3' for '1-2 hours', '4' for '2-3' hours and '5' for 'More'.

Coding of control variables

I used several control variables in the study to control the effects of the variable 'Political expression on social media' in the analysis. For statistical analysis on the basis of gender, the values for gender were coded as '1' for male and '2' for female. For the statistical analysis of the variable 'Family Income', the question 'How much is your monthly Family Income (In Rupee)' was asked. The given options were coded as '1' for '10,000-29,999', '2' for '30,000-59,999' to '5' for '90,000 or more'. Similarly, another control variable 'educational level' reflects whether the respondent's educational level affects the respondent's level of awareness, voting behavior, and political participation. However, educational level was given multiple values ('1' is coded for '1st Semester', '2' is coded for '2nd Semester', '3' is coded for '3rd Semester', '4' is coded for '4th Semester', '5' is coded for '5th Semester', '6' is coded for '6th Semester', '7' is coded for '7th Semester', '8' is coded for '8th Semester', '9' is coded for '1st year MA' and '10' is coded for '2nd year MA'.

The province appears to be a very significant control variable, as previous researches have shown that it is a substantial indicator for measuring respondents' political mobilization because of the varying socio-cultural norms and the dynamics of the local political setups of the provinces (Haider, 2017, p.121; Akhter, 2012, p.286; Waseem, 1993). According to the four administrative units of Pakistan (Provinces), this variable was coded as '1' for Punjab, '2' for Sindh, '3' for Khyber Pakhtunkha, '4' for Balochistan.

Political partisanship is another substantial indicator of measuring political mobilization as mentioned by (Garrett, 2019; Verba et al., 1995 mentioned in Campbell, 2013). To measure the effect of political partisanship in respondents' political mobilization, the respondents were asked *to rank the level of their party* affiliation using five-point likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree).

4.6 Conceptual Model of Political Communication

The proposed framework builds on a communication model explicitly stating the political use of social media which leads to political mobilization via its effects on awareness level, traditional voting behavior, online political participation, and offline political participation of university students. Based upon the assumption that all these variables collectively make an index for the political mobilization of university students, it further highlights whether and how much, do these variables contribute to political mobilization of youngsters.
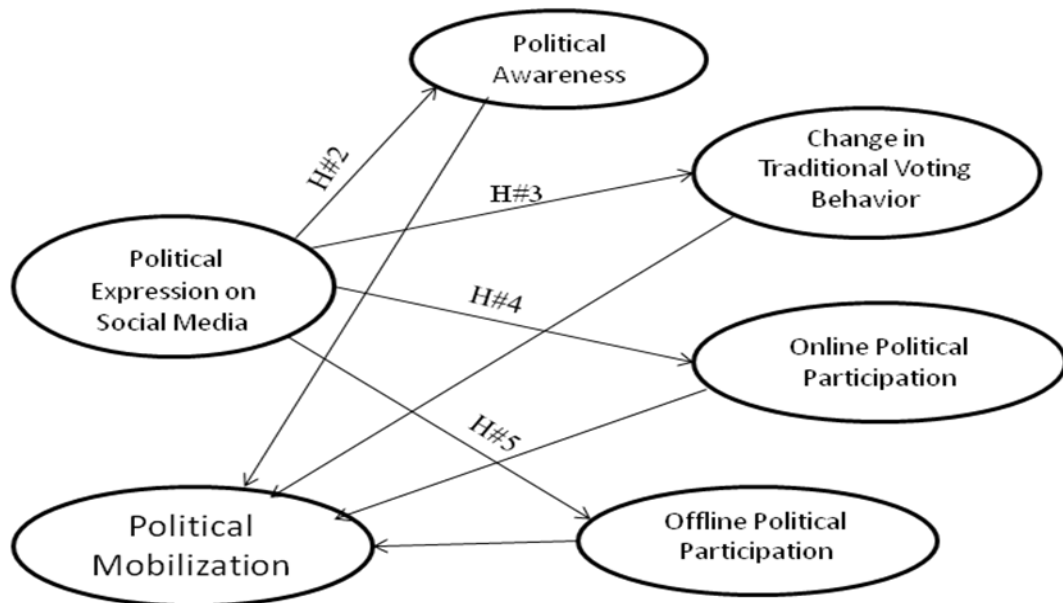
Figure 4.6 Conceptual Model of Political Communication

Political mobilization is a combination of all activities that aim to motivate respondents to express themselves politically and to partake in political activities. Different authors have operationalized political mobilization differently considering the criteria of their respective studies. For example, Nedelmann (1987) defines it as an attempt to influence the existing power structure. Other definitions are mobilization as a protest behavior (McKeon & Gitomer, 2019), voting and electoral political activism as a political mobilization (Bond et al., 2012; Conway,

1993; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1992), and political action that intend to motivate participants to express themselves and to undertake a particular political action (K. C. C. Yang & Kang, 2020).

On the bases of the theoretical synthesis in this study guided by existing literature on political participation, voting, and political efficacy in relationship with social media communication, I suggest that all political actions which take place on social media or which take place as a result of social media use can be understood as different forms of political mobilization. I have broken down the complex variable of political mobilization into different measurements for the ease of analysis i.e. political awareness, change in traditional voting behavior, online political participation, and offline political participation, all together, constitute political mobilization.

4.7 Descriptive Results

4.7.1 Descriptive Statistics of Demographics

The respondents were selected for the data collection through random sampling. Among all, the figure of male respondents is a little higher than female respondents such as male contributes 56 % and female contributes 44 % of the total sample. Province wise distribution was (300 respondents from the Province of Punjab, 150 respondents from the Province of Sindh, 150 respondents from the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkha, and 150 respondents from the Province of Balochistan). The students' age was ranging from 18 to 25 (Mean=21.42 and Median=21). Their monthly family income (Mean= 4.11, Median= 70,000-89,999, SD=.902) indicates a trend towards higher income brackets as monthly family income of 80% of respondents is more than 70,000 (Pak Rupee) and only 5.6% of respondents' families earn less than 49,999 (Pak Rupee). Educational level of respondents (Mean=5.99, Median=6, SD=2.730) was grouped into Junior level (42%) and Senior level (58%). An equal sample from each department (125) constitutes a total of 750 respondents.

Respondents' political partisanship was measured based on two items, in response to 'whether they have any political party affiliation, 63.3% agreed to have political affiliation and 22.4% disagreed with the statement about political affiliation while 14.3% remained neutral. Further, replying to the question *'Which political party they are affiliated with'* 21.5% found to be strongly affiliated with PMLN, 30.3% with PTI, 5% with PPP, and 6.6% appeared to be

affiliated with other political parties. However, the rest of the respondents were either not affiliated with any political party or remained neutral about their party affiliation.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Demographics (N=750)

Control Variables and Response categories	Response percentage	Control Variables and Response categories	Response percentage
Gender of the student			
Male	56.1%	**Province of the student**	
Female	43.9%	Punjab	40.0%
Age Mean=21.42 Median=21 SD=1.905		Sindh	20.0%
Study Department of the student		Khyber pakhtunkha	20.0%
Mass Communication	16.7%	Balochistan	20.0%
English	16.7%	**How much is your monthly Family Income (In Rupee)**	
Sociology	16.7%	Mean = 4.11 Median= 4.00 SD=.902	
Maths	16.7%	10,000-29,999	1.6%
Physics	16.7%	30,000-49,999	3.9%
Chemistry	16.7%	50,000-69,999	14.7%
Study Level of the student		70,000-89,999	42.0%
Mean= 6.02 Median= 6.00 SD=2.702		90,000 or More	37.9%
2nd Semester BS	17.9%	**You have affiliation with any political party**	
4th Semester BS	23.3%	Mean= 3.55 Median= 4.00 SD=1.329	
6th Semester BS	10.1%	Strongly Disagree	13.1%
7th Semester BS	8.1%	Disagree	9.3%
8th Semester BS	20.8%	Neutral	14.3%
1st year MA	8.1%	Agree	36.0%
2nd year MA	11.6%	Strongly Agree	27.3%

SD: Standard Deviation

4.7.2 Descriptive Statistics of General Social Media Use

Social media use is an independent variable. Social media use was measured based upon two indicators, general facebook use, and general twitter use. Many other supporting questions were also asked to know the trend of social media use. The first question *'Which type of social media do you use'* was asked. Out of all, 95.1% of respondents use Facebook, 25.3 % of

respondents reported having Twitter accounts, Youtube is used by 64.1%, 69.2% use Google, and only 6% use Linkedin.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Overall Social Media Use (N=750)

Which Social media sites do you use?		
Type of Social Media	**Response Count**	**Response Percent**
Facebook	713	95.1%
Twitter	190	25.3%
Youtube	481	64.1%
Google	567	75.6%
Linkedin	46	6.1%
How much time do you spend on SM* (Average in a typical day)		
Mean= 3.11	Median=3.00	SD**=1.179
Less than 30 minutes	86	11,5%
31-59 minutes	129	17,2%
1-2 hours	252	33,6%
3-4 hours	185	24,7%
More	98	13,1%
SM use is part of my daily routine		
Mean= 3.68	Median=4.00	SD=1.089
Strongly Disagree	33	4,4%
Disagree	66	8,8%
Neutral	124	16,5%
Agree	283	37,7%
Strongly Agree	244	32,5%
What are your major interests using SM* (in routine)		
Entertainment	426	56.8%
Chatting	165	21.9%
Social Relations	513	68.4%
Information	460	61.3%
Politics	459	61.2%
Sharing your routine activities	537	71.6%

*SM: Social Media; **SD: Standard Deviation

In response to a question, in a day *'How much time (average) do you spend on social media'* (Mean=3.11, Median= 3, SD=1.179) 13.1% of respondents spend more than 4 hours a day, 24.7 % of respondents spend 3-4 hours a day on all types of social media altogether, 33.6% of them use 1-2 hours a day and 28.7% use social media less than an hour a day. When the respondents were asked about their agreement on *'social media use is part of my daily routine'* (Mean=3.68, Median=4, SD=1.089), 70.2% of respondents were in the agreement (agree to

strongly agree) about the statement, whereas, 13.2% did not think that social media is part of their daily routine (disagree to strongly disagree) and 16.5% appeared neutral about the statement. 56.8% of respondents use social media for entertainment in routine. Informational use of social media was also high (61.3% of the respondents) in routine. Another major trend about the political use of social media was measured as 61.2% of respondents use it in routine. A very interesting phenomenon was observed that 71.6% of respondents used to 'share their routine activities' in routine such as status updates, sharing photos, etc…Besides, maintaining social relations and sharing routine activities through social media still seems to be a priority for youngsters.

4.7.3 Descriptive Statistics of Facebook Use

Respondents' use of particularly Facebook was measured through four items. The index was formed by combining the responses of four question by asking the respondents 'How many friends are in your facebook friend's list' (Mean=3.73, Median=150-200 friends, SD=1.481), the number of facebook friends' distribution was skewed toward higher brackets with 62.8% respondents having more than 150 facebook friends in their friend's list. 47.1% of all have more than 200 friends. Only 7.1% of respondents have friends less than 50, which implies that there are very few who have very limited facebook friend's circle.

Another similar question was asked from the respondents *'How many are their university friends in Facebook friend's list'* (Mean=2.85, Median=3.00, SD=1.542), their responses were almost evenly distributed on lower and higher scale limits (10-20=18%, 21-40=19.9%, 41-60=18.5%, 61-80=18%, more than 80=22.7%). An important parameter for measuring Facebook use was the question *'How frequently you use FB account'* (Mean=4.35., Median=5.00, SD=1.250), 71.6% use facebook account daily, 10.7% use it five days a week, 6.1% use facebook four days a week and 6.9% use it three days a week and there are very few (1.7%) youngsters who have made facebook accounts but do not frequently use it use. They use facebook account for less than two days a week. If we talk about the time spent on using facebook,. The question *'How much time do you spend on FB daily'* (Mean=3.15, Median=3.00, SD=1.204) was another important item for the measurement of Facebook use in terms of time n frequency of use. 25.3% of respondents said they use facebook less than 59 minutes a day, 35.5% of respondents, which the highest among all categories, confirmed 1-2 hours facebook use

daily. Whereas, on higher streams, 18.8% use facebook 2-3 hours a day and 17.2 % use facebook more than 3 hours a day.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of General use of Facebook and Twitter

How many friends are in your friends list of Facebook account?		How many followers do you have on twitter?	
Response Categories	**Response percentage**	**Response Categories**	**Response percentage**
1- 50	2.9%	1-10	4.5%
51-100	7.1%	11-20	6.1%
101-150	13.9%	21-30	3.7%
150-200	13.3%	31-40	2.7%
More than 200	15.7%	More than 40	8.0%

You use Facebook/ Twitter account		
Response Categories	**Facebook**	**Twitter**
Two days a week	1.7%	.4%
Three days a week	6.9%	4.4%
Four days a week	6.1%	4.5%
Five days a week	10.7%	5.5%
Daily	71.6%	10.3%
Do not use	2.9%	74.9%

How much time do you spend on Facebook/ Twitter in a typical day?		
Response Categories	**Facebook**	**Twitter**
None	3.2%	.1%
less than 59 min	25.3%	4.7%
1-2 hours	35.5%	13.7%
2-3 hours	18.8%	5.5%
More	17.2%	1.1%

4.7.4 Descriptive Statistics of Twitter Use

The use of Twitter was measured on an additive index based on the items such as *'How many followers you have on Twitter'* 8.8% of respondents follow more than 40 people in twitter out of all 750 respondents (among all 25.3 % (190) respondents use Twitter), 2.8% said that they follow 31-40 people on twitter, 3.6% respondents follow 21-30 people, 6% follow 11-20 people and 6.1% respondents follow 1-10 people through their twitter accounts. The second measuring

parameter was the question about *'How frequently you use Twitter account in a week'*, out of all 750 respondents 10.8% said that they use twitter daily, 7.1% use twitter account five days a week, and 4.7% of respondents use four days a week, and while asking *'How much time do you spend on twitter daily'* there appear to be more medium-level users of twitter in terms of time spent in a day e.g. 20.8% (156) out of twitter user 25.3% (190) agreed to use twitter 1-3 hours a day, while there are 5.2% who use twitter but less than one hour a day.

According to the results, total twitter users were (190 cases, 25.3% of all 750 respondents), among the students who use twitter, and were very keen users of twitter, most of them use it daily and use 1-3 hours a day.

Political use of twitter users shows that they are very active users of twitter; they are following famous political figures, leaders, and political parties without political preferences. Moreover, they have followers from their friend's circle; most of the respondents have more than 40 followers. Recent scholarship has argued that widened friends' circle on social media gives rise to rapid communication (Jost et al., 2018; Yunus, 2013).

After the collection of data, many important things were figured out, for example, the data about no. of facebook and twitter users endorsed the nationwide findings (PEW, 2015, datareportal.com, statista.com, 2020). The use of facebook by more than 95% of users represent that there is a greater focus on using facebook and the respondents rely heavily on facebook communication whereas it seems not true for twitter as only 25.6% of respondents use twitter for their routine communication.

4.7.5 Cross Tabulation with Demographics

Demographics wise Social Media Use

As the proportion of male and female respondents in data collection is not the same, better was to calculate the percentages of male and female social media users not on the basis of total no. of social media users. However, I calculated percentages of male n female social media users based on the total no. of male and female participants of the study (weight wise ratios, equal weight proportion).

Gender wise distribution of facebook use (43.2% females and 56.8% males) corresponds to the actual percentage of male and female respondents who participated in the study (44%

females and 56% males). It implies that there is very little difference in facebook use on the basis of gender (96.2 % of men in comparison to 93.6% of women have their facebook profiles.

However, in the case of twitter use, the gender-wise distribution (25.2% females and 74.8% male users out of total twitter users, which is 34.21% males in comparison to 14.28% female twitter users) do not, at all, represents the actual number of females and males participated in the study. In the same way, the number of facebook users in the province of Punjab (282, 39.7%) is almost double of the facebook users in other provinces (Sindh=19.6%, Khyber Pakhtunkha= 20%, and Balochistan=20.7%) which again corresponds to the actual percentage of the survey participants in each province (Punjab= 40% and all other provinces= 20%). But according to their weight, 96.67% of university youth from the province of Punjab agreed that they use facebook accounts, as compared to 93.33% university youth from the province of Sindh, 95.33% university youth from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha, and 93.33 % university youth from the province of Balochistan. Nevertheless, in the case of Twitter use, the picture is a bit different i.e. 33.33% university youth of the province of Punjab, whereas 18%, university youth from the province of Sindh, 24% from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha, and 18.67% university youth from the province of Balochistan uses Twitter accounts.

Study level is assumed to be another important factor that can affect social media communication patterns. Assuming that there may be different patterns of use of facebook and twitter among different study levels, initially, the study levels were measured as the students of the eight semesters of BS and first and second-year students of Masters. Further for the analysis purpose, these study levels have been divided into 'Junior-Level' and 'Senior-Level' students. About facebook use among junior and senior-level students, 296 students (41.5% of all facebook users and 95.8% of all junior-level university student) from the junior-level reported having their facebook profiles, whereas, from senior-level students' use of facebook, 417 students (58.5% of all facebook users and 94.6% of all senior-level university students) have their facebook profiles. In the case of twitter use, junior level students rank lower (70 respondents out of 190 twitter users, 36.8%) than senior-level students (120 respondents out of 190 twitter users, 63.2%) i.e. 22.7% of junior-level university students have twitter accounts as compared to 27.4% senior-level university students. That is, the senior-level students are more likely to communicate through twitter than junior-level students.

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Facebook and Twitter usage: Gender wise, Province wise and Study Department wise

Demographics of the Students	Facebook		Twitter	
	Response Count	Response Percentage	Response Count	Response Percentage
Gender				
Male	405	96.19%	144	34.21%
Female	308	93.61%	47	14.28%
Total	713		191	
Province				
Punjab	290	96.67%	100	33.33%
Sindh	140	93.33%	27	18%
Khyber Pakhtunkha	143	95.33%	36	24%
Balochistan	140	93.33%	28	18.67%
Total	713		191	
Study Department				
Mass Communication	123	96.8%	42	33.6%
English	119	93.6%	39	31.2%
Sociology	120	96%	29	23.2%
Maths	118	94.4%	26	20.8%
Physics	116	95.2%	26	20.8%
Chemistry	117	92%	29	23.2%
Total	713		191	

Comparison of Social Science and Physical Science

The use of social media especially facebook and twitter among the students of different departments of the universities was also measured to analyze the varying usage patterns among three social science departments (Mass Communication, English, Sociology) and three physical science departments (Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry). No significant difference was observed in the facebook usage among two different academic groups (Social sciences and Physical sciences), whereas both academic groups have different usage patterns as far as twitter use was concerned i.e. the contribution of social science discipline in using twitter was 57.6%, while 42.4% students of physical sciences discipline said that they use twitter accounts.

4.7.6 Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Political Expression

Political expression on social media is main independent variable of the study. The additive index of political expression on social media was based on six items (three items of facebook use and three items of twitter use). Respondents were asked *'How many political groups or pages you joined on FB'* (Mean=3.52, Median=4, SD=1.263), more than 50% (50.4%) respondents out of all and 53% respondents who use facebook confirmed as the members of more than 5 political groups and pages. However, 45.7% have joined 1-4 political groups. In response to the questions *'How many political FB posts you shared during elections in a week'* (Mean=3.24, Median=3, SD=1.247), 46.1% of respondents said that they share more than 31 posts (average) in a week, around 45.2% share 1-30 posts in a week.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Political Expression on Facebook and Twitter

	How many political groups or pages have you joined on facebook	How many political characters do you follow on twitter
Response Options	**Response Percentage**	**Response Percentage**
None	3.9%	74.9%
1-2	23.2%	1.5%
3-4	22.5%	4.7%
5-6	18.0%	8.1%
More	32.4%	10.8%
	How many political posts (average) in a week you posted or shared on facebook	How many political tweets (average) in a week you share with your followers.
Response Options	**Response Percentage**	**Response Percentage**
None	8.7%	74.7%
1-15	24.4%	4.4%
16-30	21.5%	7.5%
31-50	26.9%	6.8%
More	18.5%	6.7%
	You comment on your friends' political posts	You comment on others' tweets
Response Options	**Response Percentage**	**Response Percentage**
Never	5.9%	75.9%
Rarely	17.7%	4.7%
Sometimes	25.7%	11.2%
Often	30.7%	6.1%
Always	20.0%	2.1%

In the third item *'how frequently they comment on other's post'* (Mean=3.41, Median=4, SD=1.162), 20% of respondents agreed that they always comment on other's posts, 30.7% do it often, 25.7% comment sometimes, 17.7% rarely comment, and 5.9% do not comment at all. Nevertheless, the point to ponder is that 5% of respondents do not use facebook and eventually they won't do any activity (share, comment et…) on facebook.

Social media political expression through twitter was measured as an additive index of three items. In the first item, the question *'how many political figures you follow on twitter'* was asked from the respondents (Mean = 1.78, Median= 1.00, SD = 1.433). Among all respondents (out of 750 respondents, 25.3 % (190) respondents use Twitter), 6.2% of respondents follow 1-4 political figures on twitter, whereas 19 % of respondents are following more than five political figures on twitter. In the second item, respondents were asked *'how many political tweets average in a week you share with your followers'* (Mean = 1.66, Median= 1.00, SD = 1.258). 11.9% of respondents share 1-30 tweets (average) in a week and around 13.5% share more than 30 tweets (average) in a week. According to the collected data, among all respondents, the twitter users account for 25.3%, but most of the twitter users seem to be more than average users of twitter. And in third item, the frequency of their 'comments' on others tweets was asked.75.9% of respondents do not comment on others' tweet, it includes those who do not at all use twitter account and very few respondents who use twitter account but do not comment on others tweets. Others include 4.7%, 11.2%, 6.1%, and 2.1% who comment rarely, sometimes, often, and always respectively.

Chapter 5. Political Expression on Social Media and Political Awareness

5.1 Introduction

The viability of internet-mediated communication especially social media as a more feasible public sphere has been argued in chapter two in detail and also by many communication scholars (Bode et al., 2014; Calhoun, 1992; A. Yousaf et al., 2012). However, the argument that the internet-mediated communication proved as a successful public sphere has been concluded because of several reasons; first, because of the level of independence and freedom of expression on social media (Deane, 2005), second, because of its interactive communication nature of social media (Licoppe, 2004), third, because there is the least margin of restrictions and censorship which can be imposed on social media (Breuer et al., 2012; Caywood, 2018), and fourth, because of the alternative roles of its users as a producer and consumer (Lüders, 2008, p. 685, quoted in Lomborg, 2011, p. 56). Hence, all these characteristics differentiate it from other types of mediated communication i.e. mainstream media communication.

For political communication, social media is now supposed as a more popular platform for bringing sustainable change in the political environment of any country. Whether this is about creating favorable opinion, bringing change, or mobilizing people for a social or political cause, awareness is the key element and the minimum requirement for all these aspects of political activism. Recently and in the last few years, many authors have focused on measuring engagement through the political use of social media, most of these found direct causal links of social media use with engagement. We are here more concerned to analyze the mechanism through which social media have effects on engagement. The political use of social media has an indirect positive link with engagement which comes via a direct positive link with political awareness (Boulianne, 2009, 2015, 2016; Loader et al., 2014). Boulianne and many other scholars emphasizing on finding mediators such as political knowledge and political awareness argue that social media could affect (positively) by affecting (positively) mediating factors (Boulianne, 2016; See also Dimitrova et al., 2014). However, this chapter of the ongoing study is designed to know whether political expression on facebook and twitter increases political awareness of youngsters and further, whether increased political awareness has positive effects on online and offline political participation of youngsters (will be discussed in chapter 7 and 8).

The study proceeds with building its theoretical ground discussing literature on the use of social media and its effects on political knowledge and awareness.

5.2 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical support for the study is built on one of the very essential components of 'Theory of democracy' taken from the book 'Democracy and its critics' by Dahl (1989). Emphasizing, democracy as the rule by the people, Dahl specifies the requirements of the democratic process. Among them is the enlightened understanding of civic and political issues. He asserts that the citizens are an integral part of the decision-making process in democracy and they should have provided the equal opportunity to have access to the knowledge and freedom to make rational decisions. In a democratic political structure, an individual must have the capability to understand and judge what is best for them and for the country. And this can only happen if they are fully informed and have an understanding of the political issues of the country. Well-informed citizenry is an integral part of the democratic process, according to Dahl. Moreover, according to the enlightened understanding in Dahl (1989)'s 'Theory of Democratic Process', people should have equal opportunities to understand the issues and concerns of civic and political nature. To decide about the choices, which are in the best interest of the citizens, an enlightened understanding of civic and political issues is very necessary.

The current study is designed to know the political mobilization of university students through the political use of social media. However, political awareness is a very important constituent variable of political mobilization. According to the preconditions of the democratic process, the study also aimed to know the level of political awareness of youngsters as a result of the political use of social media. I have already established that social media is a free, open, independent, and liberal public sphere where users have equal access to participate in discussions on national political and civic issues. Furthermore, I have also established the democratic consequences of these open and independent discussions in the political realm of the country, through many studies and examples from the political setup of the country in chapter three.

After explaining the theoretical background of the study and establishing social media as a public sphere, I am more concerned about designing its conceptual framework explaining, (i) what are the implications of political awareness in democratic and non-democratic political

structures and (ii) whether/ how social media is helping in creating political awareness in its users in both types of political structures.

5.3 Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In this study, in order to measure political awareness as an effect of the political use of social networking sites and microblogging services, we need to firmly establish a conceptual understanding of political awareness and further, how political awareness is to be measured empirically using survey research design. *What Being politically aware is* raises many questions; how people make political choices in the realm of their political life, how people make preferences about policies, how they make political decisions, how much are they informed about their social and economic issues which are to be solved by elected politicians. For every question to answer, individuals' unique ideologies, thoughts, liking and disliking, political partisanship, knowledge, values, and many other preconditions influence individual's rationality and play a vital role in an individual's political awareness.

5.3.1 Political Information and Knowledge

Every information or message requires intellectual processing to know its good and bad aspecst for an individual or society as a whole. While discussing how people make political preferences, Zaller defines it, as paying attention and understanding what an individual comes across, (Zaller, 1992, The nature and origins of mass opinion). Lange conceptualizes political awareness by endorsing zaller's concept and using 'Mental Model' for perception, selection, and understating of the political world, (2006, quoted in De Vibe et al., 2018).

De Vibe et al., (2018)'s work is absolutely focusing on the conceptualization of political awareness and how it can be measured in surveys. Starting from the individual's pre-conditions (previous political experiences, personal standards, own political values, emotions) and psychological orientation to their orientation with political objects (information, events, policies), their analysis goes beyond many stages of the process of political awareness i.e political attentiveness, political knowledge, and political understanding, discussions. However, through the analysis of a large body of research, we observe a general conceptual framework of how awareness is defined and understood; however, we also find a research body that conceptualizes awareness with some variations (De Vibe et al., 2018). Awareness as a concept

does not occupy absolute meaning, it is a relative term, relative to an individual's pre-conditions such as knowledge, existing ideologies, values, thoughts, and how people prefer certain thoughts or activities over others. There may be two different even counter understandings about the same information, event, action or policy.

As of Zaller's definition, political awareness develops as a result of the exchange of political information between individuals. Further, political knowledge, according to Cantijoch et al. (2016) and Gibson & Cantijoch (2013), is a subdivision of political awareness (quoted in Alami, 2017). As I have already argued that social media as a public sphere have the principle foundation of an open discussion on any issue, right to participate freely, equal access, and equality of participation. Repeated exposure of the same information and the exposure of the same information from multiple sources encourage the users of that information to think about it and make an opinion. This argument is endorsed by Althaus, (2003), he argues that even an indirect and subtle exposure of information can change the saliency of information and alters public opinion. However, I argue that not all information coming through these sources is equally authentic and effective. The diversity in information sources and the level of authenticity provides enhanced exposure and triggers cognitive function in an individual's mind. Online social networks encourage multiple and diversified political messages from various sources. Various sources provide multiple aspects of the same information and having multiple aspects and even counter arguments in consideration about one information make easier to process particular information and to reach some cognitive decision. Such cognitive processing leads to awareness (Zaller, 1992).

5.3.2 Political Discussions

Social networks as a discussion forum, having multiple, diversified, and counter opinions on any issue, help others on the same network to process multiple dimensions of the political information intellectually. But to what extent this enhanced exposure due to diversity in information sources may affect the political mobilization process is a question.

Social media's online community is the leading and expanding community that is also more liberal and democratic for sharing ideas, information, and opinion. As more members join a social network, the network gets denser and it brings more information exposure and more awareness due to more and rapid information exchange and views among the network members

(Khalifa, 2011). Discussions allow them to have impact of awareness on each other and to reach the decision that which is right, and which is wrong. On social media, every user who acts as a producer wants to influence others' opinions via informing about political issues and spreading awareness on different issues. This was partly discussed by Dimitrova et. al., while discussing political engagement argues that political use of social media increases political knowledge and awareness, which in turn increases political engagement (2014, pp. 95–118; see also Boulianne, 2016).

Social media's networked structure encourages communication through discussion among network members. Xiongfei Cao et al., (2016) argue that routine communication among employees enhances people's awareness by speedy transfer of knowledge. People get knowledge and awareness from other's activities. Social media as a public sphere is comparatively more alive and democratic, offering convincing critiques about political mal-functioning, governance, and elections. Social media has provided a powerful forum for young people to express and discuss their political selves, political ideas, and political affiliations. Reilly (2011) endorsing the same argument says that social media has emerged as a dominant platform through which everyday citizens have come to share, organize, and communicate their ideas, often in the form of serious political critique or even disrespectful satirical comments. Despite the fact, that the platform of social media makes an expanded sphere of discussion accessible to a large number of online users, but the question still exists that to what extent it reshapes the public through political learning.

5.3.3 Individual's Political Interest

Another important indicator of political awareness which researchers suggested is the individuals' interest in important national political issues of the country. Citizens of the democratic political structure should have at least a minimum understanding of the political system. However, it is the individuals' interests that motivate to follow them the political events (Amer, 2009). Engaging in political discussion is a matter of prior political interest. Many scholars have regarded political interest as a precondition and mediating factors for political activism (Beaumont, 2011; Maurissen, 2020). Nevertheless, citizens' interest in politics does not always translate into political participation, but it may possibly enhance the urge to get into political information and knowledge, which eventually translates into political awareness.

However, many researchers also found a direct and indirect link with many political activities such as voting, political election campaigning (Maurissen, 2020; Van Deth & Elff, 2004). A higher level of political interest in adolescents is likely to produce more political awareness and intentions for political participation (Khalifa, 2011).

Specifically focusing on political awareness aspect, which is to be measured in this study, being informed about the election process, election campaigns, political events, about politicians' constituencies, political parties, about politicians' personal and political scandals, about the social and economic issue in context to politics, evaluating political content and how to make voting preference would have empirical application.

Given that, the political history of Pakistan is marked by several years of dictatorship and the limited role of media in information dissemination, there has been less margin of awareness due to fewer sources of independent information. Political awareness of the youth of Pakistan in any way contributes to strengthening the democratic values in the political structure of Pakistan. In this framework, we believe that not only the democracy in conventional meanings as just having a label of democracy but democratic political values such as liberal and independent political thoughts and independence in making choices in the decision-making process should also prevail in the political system of the country. The study of political awareness in context to youth is important because of many reasons i.e. the modern sources of information, which are supposed to provide awareness, are mostly used by young people, youth's role in the political system and in strengthening democracy in the country and for youth's effective political participation. Nevertheless, youth's political awareness is more important to study in the particular context of Pakistan as there is a large majority of youth population; more than 63 % population is youth (Hafeez & Fasih, 2018, UN Population Fund Report 2017).

Coming to the starting point of this chapter, I will now discuss here the likelihood of citizens' political awareness in democratic and non-democratic regimes due to online social networks like facebook and twitter.

5.4 Political Awareness through Social Media in Non-Democratic Regimes

After studying social media as a public sphere earlier, we reach to a more nuanced and clear understanding of the concept that engagement through social media cannot be halted even in authoritarian regimes also as stated by many scholars (Breuer et al., 2012; Castells, 2010;

Caywood, 2018). For example, political researchers have turned their focus on studying awareness through online social networks in relationship with authoritarian regimes (Breuer et al., 2012; M. O. Jones, 2017; Reuter & Szakonyi, 2012; Storck, 2011) and democratic regimes (Karamat & Farooq, 2016; Teresi, 2012). Online Social networks provide massive opportunities to societies in authoritarian regimes to express their grievances and anger which otherwise cannot be expressed (Jost et al., 2018, pp. 86–87); see also Mcgarty et al., 2014). Many other studies have also explored this phenomenon; among them is the study of Berkman center for internet and society that explores the relationship of information and communication technologies on civic engagement in authoritarian regimes (Goldstein, 2011). McGarty et.al. argue that social media is featured to overcome barriers to freedom of expression which otherwise not possible in the case of other media; hence fewer restrictions can be applied on social media (2014, pp. 725–740).

By restricting media freedom, every media even private media becomes state-controlled media and in a state-controlled media environment, the non-democratic and semi-democratic political regimes don't allow spreading such information which is against them, by filtering the information flow. Hence, they try to control citizens by controlling access to information through media, which turns citizens against them. Nevertheless, this is particularly against Dahl's requirements of democracy. According to the theory of democracy, the citizens must be given equal opportunity to understand the issues of the country. However, this is simply because the sources of information are one of the major reasons which undermine authoritarian regimes. But as with the case of new media and online social networks, there is less control over the flow of information, and the question of how and to what extent authoritarian regimes can control information flow, through the online social network to resist citizen's awareness, is also analyzed by many scholars (Breuer et al., 2012; M. O. Jones, 2017) and resulted that online social networks reduces barriers to flow of information and collective action and thus try to, somehow, undermine the non-democratic regimes (Reuter & Szakonyi, 2012, p. 2). However, this might be true under certain favorable conditions because contradictory scholarship is also available, for example, Morozov talking about Iran and China concludes that dictators have other tools to control disagreements in citizens and even which does not actually undermine authoritarianism and promote democracy (2011). However, in addition to this, by using a combination of structured questionnaire from Iranian students, interviews with lecturers and media experts, a

direct and positive relationship between social networks' use and political knowledge, attitude and behavior is found (Alami, 2017). He further found an intervening variable 'social participation' which also affects political knowledge and political behaviors. Similarly, the role of social media is also found to be statistically significant in developing social responsibility and political awareness in Jordanian youth (Jarrar & Hammud, 2018).

For a conceptual explanation of the relationship between political knowledge and political awareness, Cantijoch et al. (2016) and Gibson & Cantijoch (2013) call political knowledge as a subdivision of political awareness (quoted in Alami, 2017). Focusing on a specific aspect of political awareness 'knowledge of electoral fraud' in authoritarian regimes, Reuter concludes that under certain conditions online social networks can increase political awareness, for example, if networks have already been politicized by opposition elites. Further, he also explains that not all networks have the same level of effect on political awareness which actually depends on the level of the use of the social networks (2017). Through quantitative research design, Khalifa analyzed the heavy use of online political news and its impacts on political awareness of Egyptian students and German students and found a positive relationship among both variables (2011). Hence, concluding the phenomenon of social media use and political awareness in 'undermining authoritarian regimes', mixed shreds of evidence are found through many studies in recent times.

Highlighting feministic perspective, Altuwayjiri studied the political use of microblogging service, twitter, by Saudi women. He concluded that twitter proved as a key enabler for raising political awareness in women in Saudi Arabia. He termed it as a political public sphere for women to express their political selves (2017).

5.5 Political Awareness through Social Media in Democratic Regimes

In democratic regimes, the use of social media may lead to non-violent protests and peaceful campaigns for political and national issues (Breuer et al., 2012). The proliferation of social media content- initiated by citizen journalists or online activists for the sake of awareness about corruption, poor law and order situation, poverty, tax theft, human rights violations, and many other social and political issues- make it an awareness campaign (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012, p. 364). Yousaf, Rehman & Naqvi in their study examined the political use of social media by students. Through a survey of university students, they concluded that social media as a public

sphere raised political awareness and promoted online activism in real-world political activities (2012, pp. 74–100). In another study, social media is found as the most popular platform for youngsters in Pakistan in context to political interest and further found positive relationship with political awareness (R. Ali & Fatima, 2016).

Unlike nondemocratic regimes where the main issue is to challenge unelected power structures, the democratic regimes may have many other issues to rise on online social platforms such as consequences of the deteriorating economy, inflation, poor law and order situation, education and health conditions, etc. Discussion and acceleration of social, political, and economic issues on online social networks form a shape of an awareness campaign.

Due to the subversive nature of online social networks (M. O. Jones, 2017), it has already made many changes in the already established system of information production, distribution, and consumption where individual users get power by challenging monopoly over the production of content (Jenkins, 2006). User-generated content based upon political information opens a discussion among individuals on the network. Social media is more dependent on the participation of users through the production of content by them. In contrast to state-controlled and other private traditional media, online social networks have provided a platform of experimentation for producers, distributors, and consumers of the content. This is how users of online social networks become empowered (Lomborg, 2014). And in this participatory environment, the empowered producers collectively and individually involved in the knowledge production (Burns & Meek, 2015), since expanding the margin of awareness because of the flow of and access to the information.

While building a theoretical perspective and establishing concrete grounds of this study for analyzing the effects of the political use of social networking sites and microblogging services, I tried in this study to equip it with the literature from studies all over the world. Undoubtedly, a large body of research is done from American perspective and is carried out by many researchers (Dimitrova et al., 2014; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Jost et al., 2018; S. Lee & Xenos, 2020; Loader et al., 2014; Rainie et al., 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2012). Relying upon only this literature would not have been justifiable and could be a loophole for this study. Therefore, I tried to establish a scholarship based on collecting different perspectives from studies conducted in different parts of the world. However, the studies from different countries having a background of the variety of political structures endorse the same phenomenon under certain

conditions (Ahmed, 2011; Breuer et al., 2012; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Ali & Fatima, 2016; Altuwayjiri, 2017**;** Jarrar & Hammud, 2018; Jost et al., 2018)) and some studies do not support the studied phenomenon (Dimitrova et al., 2014; S. Lee & Xenos, 2020; Amer, 2009).

Some studies explored a different dimension of the effects of the political use of social media on political knowledge and awareness. By using cross-sectional and panel data, contradictory results explain that political social media use does not have a significant impact on political knowledge, even general social media use has a negative effect on political knowledge (Lee & Xenos, 2019) and with two-panel surveys, week relationship is found among digital media use and political learning (Dimitrova et al., 2014).

The aspect of political awareness in context to women is also analyzed by Amer on women of Nagaland. Measuring three variables media exposure, political interest, and political discussion he analyzed that how politically well-informed Naga women are and found the influence of women's awareness on their participation in political activities. However, no significant impact of political awareness on women's participation in politics was found. The important thing in this research is to note that even though he found no significant relationship between political awareness of women with their political participation but still research concludes that their level of political awareness corresponds to their level of interest in politics, patterns of media use, and frequency of political discussions. As they have a moderate level of interest in politics so are moderately aware of politics (Amer, 2009).

Social media has been acknowledged as an imperative part of social and political movements in many parts of the world. A great deal of scholarship has focused on political movements, for example, Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protest in New York, Arab spring protest in many middle eastern countries, Gezi park protests in Turkey (Jost et al., 2018, pp. 85–118; Mcgarty et al., 2014, pp. 725–740) and the military coup against Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey in 2016, profoundly for facilitating the rapid exchange of information, awareness about protest activities and accelerating the process resulting in more quick mobilization[50].

It can be observed that social media was not actually created for political uses (Facebook.com). But with the passage of time, these have also been used by political parties and their workers for creating favorable opinions among the public via the cognitive process

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[50] Article can be accessed from <u>How Erdogan turned to social media to help foil coup in Turkey | Financial Times (ft.com)</u>
Rachel Einwohner, Sociology Professor in Purdue University, 2018, see https://wtop.com

discussed above (Tasenţe & Nicoleta, 2013). Similarly, political parties and political candidates also communicate with their supporters and voters, this content is then endorsed, opposed, shared, commented, liked, and criticized by users of social media.

Now I will move the discussion to another dimension which helps to enhance the political efficacy of social media users. There are many researches which studied political awareness through news use, and through entertainment and infotainment content. Satirical content on mass media is assumed to play a role in the political awareness of users by triggering negative and positive emotions. However, the role of social media political satire in political awareness of users is also very important to review through previous literature. The following discussion will through light on this dimension.

5.6 Social Media and Political Satire

It has been observed that a large body of research is focusing on awareness through social media political satire specifically and through political satire on other mass media generally (Chen et al., 2017). The researchers who are concerned to know the relationship between awareness and political satire have figured out generally, that different forms and types of content and multiple content genre make a particular media more attractive and versatile and specifically making politics more attractive than ever before through catching the audience's attention (Chmel et al., 2018; Lawrason, 2017). Satire is very popular on every mass media, audiences of every age group are attracted to political satire making them more actively involved in politics (Aburmishan, 2018).

Irrespective of any context, political satire is to provide entertainment through political content. According to Gale, satire is that specializes in gaining entertainment from politics (2007, mentioned in Aburmishan, 2018). Satire as a comedic genre is skillfully designed to function both as a political information tool and as a satirical –critical assessment of political discourse. As Zeeshan Hassan, an executive producer of one of the renowned TV channels in Pakistan, Geo television, states in an internet article that political satire is not just funny, it is serious too[51] (2017). We have noticed this political discourse as 'a politically slanted criticism' of government, political parties, and even political leaders framed in a comedic style.

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[51]Hassan, Z., (2017). Article can be accessed from Not Just Funny: Political Satire Is Serious (geo.tv)
Grabmeier, J., (2017). Not just funny: Satirical news has serious political effects -- ScienceDaily, Ohio State University

In 24/7 news and information flow in today's' media environment, new trends are being introduced with a mixture of 'news and information' and entertainment for audiences, these infotainment programs are even more successful in attracting all types of audiences (McClennen & Maise, 2014). Today's political satire is different from political humor, political satire involves rational-critical political and social discourse and the media audience wants critical reflection in political and social humor. Such a critical and rational aspect for the evaluation of satire is induced expecting that it will create awareness and motivate change (McClennen & Maise, 2014). Further, McClennen asserts that these satirical shows are regarded by younger audiences as important news sources but in a lighter and pleasant manner which is also endorsed by Kucera (2015: late night comedy and its effects on public's political opinion) and (Cutbirth, 2011). Satire is discussed by many scholars as a political communication that helps engaging young voters, also for providing information, elaboration, and narration through 'joyful comic discourse' (Gray et al., 2009; M. O. Jones, 2017; McClennen & Maise, 2014). In an idealistic manner, Satire is used as a tool to expose evils of society, this argument seems rational when it comes to exposing shortcomings of politicians and powerful people and is forming society by raising the voice and creating awareness (Cutbirth, 2011; M. O. Jones, 2017; Maguire, 2015, In 'Power of Satire'). Many researchers discussed the potential impacts of political satire on the public's political knowledge, awareness, and opinion (Aburmishan, 2018; Akif et al., 2012; Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Kucera, 2015; D. G. Young & Hoffman, 2012).

Past and recent studies which dealt with political satire and its effects infer that exposure to political satirical can enhance public participation and engagement in politics by encouraging discussion among audiences which is an important indicator of political awareness (Xiaoxia Cao & Brewer, 2008; Chen et al., 2017; H. Lee, 2013). However, this is already concluded earlier in this chapter by referring to many previous studies that awareness is the initial step or the key element to reach participation or engagement in political or civic activity (Boulianne, 2009, 2015; Dimitrova et al., 2014; Loader et al., 2014). Nevertheless, Chen et al. examining political satire on parameters of counter-attitudinal and pro-attitudinal political satire, found that exposure to counter-attitudinal political satire increases political participation more than pro- attitudinal political satire through evoking one's anger about an issue. Every nation's democratic values are somehow marked by political satires which are helpful in influencing public opinion and

changing their internal political efficacy (2017) and in enhancing the participatory and deliberate democratic political discourse among masses (H. Lee, 2013).

The use of satire in politics is not new, the history of satires is found in very ancient times such an example is Aristophanes who was famous as a political satirist in ancient Athens. Benjamin Franklin, who is recognized as America's first satirist, was also a newspaper publisher and politician. He is the pioneer in using political cartoons and caricature to attract the public (Caricature and Allusion).

Satirists are successful as they produce and offer in multiple content genres and forms, mixing news and information with humor. The use of multiple genres makes it attractive and interesting; this may be assumed as one of the factors that make satire in general and political satire, in particular, more popular among the masses. This helps the general masses to understand, in a non-serious way, complex and critical political and social mal-functioning and scandals about the personal and political lives of social and political elites. It is correcting the misinformation of the news, making the political elites accountable, and tuning the masses with combined productivity of awareness through entertainment and engagement (Higgie, 2017). Moreover, satires and the satirists are more trusted as compared to the other serious natured-content about news and information (Higgie, 2017, pp. 73–74; Pew, 2007)

> *"A non-serious and fundamentally ambiguous form of communication potentially hurtful, hard to contest, easy to deny". Satire is a part of humour which is designed to convey some form of serious, critical (depending upon the satirist's aim and intension) or corrective intent whose purpose is not merely humorous.* (Kuipers, 2015, p. 70).

Many previous studies have analyzed political comedy shows aired on television in many perspectives, 'alone or in combination'. For example, infotainment and late-night comedy shows have been analyzed by many researchers in reference to political awareness (McClennen, 2012; Kucera, 2015) and political engagement of audiences (Xiaoxia Cao & Brewer, 2008; H. Lee, 2013). While discussing the comedy shows on American television channels, Kufta, in an online

article, says that the shows like Late Show, Late Night, The daily Show etc… have helped to incorporate awareness of political issues in American consciousness[52] (2017).

Political satirical content is mostly based upon major news stories since having an awareness aspect through the exposure of information for the people who seek entertainment. The effects of late-night comedy shows are very evident through many studies (Kucera, 2015; Lee, 2013; Rosen, 2018.; Sarver, 2007). Many studies analyzed the impact of political satirical shows on political socialization and political awareness of audiences (Nazir & Bhatti, 2016), on public's political opinion (Kucera, 2015), and the level of trustworthiness of satirical content (Housholder & LaMarre, 2014; Lamarre et al., 2009) and found that these satirical shows and the other satirical content have a significant impact on mentioned factors and have a higher level of trust rate on the content. Political Audiences of such political satirical content are usually having less interest in news content and are politically unsophisticated (Nazir & Bhatti, 2016; Sarver, 2007). So such an incidental exposure to major news stories of the day in the form of satire makes the politically less engaged public aware of the political environment (H. Lee, 2013; Sarver, 2007). As far as the informational aspect of these satirical shows is concerned, these shows have a sufficient amount of information based upon political news which makes sense of politics (Xiaoxia Cao & Brewer, 2008; Matsa, 2010). Studies show that almost all type of audiences are attracted towards today's satirical programs, they work as an entertainment and as an awareness tool too (PEW 2004), moreover, these shows are successful in attracting less politically engaged public to the mass-mediated environment of public discussions (Faina, 2013; H. Lee, 2013).

In most of the countries of the world and, especially in America's presidential elections, media coverage through satire played a very important role in Election campaigns. Due to a shift in sources of information from traditional media to new emerging user-generated content on social media, there is now a great focus of research on user-generated satire for learning (Teresi, 2012) and awareness (Bedard & Schoenthaler, 2018).

Nevertheless, this can be concluded that Satire is acknowledged upon its applicability as a successful critique of social and political elites and evils. Media discourse in the form of satire

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[52] Kufta, A., (2017). Comedy's role in political awareness – The Announcer (nazannouncer.com). Allison Kufta is an editor in chief in THE ANNOUNCER, the students's online news site.

is more attractive and appealing for most of the audience and leaves an impression on them (Reilly, 2011). Political satire is mostly focused on political parties and political leaders (Ford, 2018). Satirists make their way in media discourse on behalf of their audiences. Most of the satirists use very open and 'black and white' narrative to portray some actions and to narrate statements of the politicians but some, while criticizing the government or political elites use grey areas for interpretation, keeping their selves protected against any reaction (Freedman, 2011, pp. 87–114).

Political satire is usually used to undermine opposing political parties and political leaders, to manipulate scandals of political candidates, and to use it as propaganda against other political parties. The democratic nature of social media allows its users to freely construct and disseminate political satire against government policies, government authorities, political leaders, and political candidates. Satirical content sometimes works very silently and leaves long-term effects which usually other serious critiques cannot have (Lamarre et al., 2009, pp. 212–231). All other media such as mainstream media television, radio, newspapers take advantage of this and many studies have proven that political satire on mainstream media such as late-night comedy shows put effects even more than other serious political criticism (H. Lee, 2013) and increase in internal political efficacy (Hoffman & Thomson, 2009).

5.6.1 Political Satire in Pakistan

In Pakistan, after media liberation in 2003, many private satellite television channels started their transmissions and soon they became the most widespread and efficient tool for news and information. Besides this, many television channels also started infotainment programs. The purpose of these programs was to deliver a mixture of information and entertainment rather than to make the audience bombarded by information and news. Not only the political satire on mainstream media got popular during elections 2013 and 2018 in Pakistan but a political satire on social media also used to be more viral with excessive sharing of content during the elections These infotainment shows focus on news content and are aired late at night. 'Hum Sub Umeed Se Hain' very popular show hosted by different faces at different times, 'Hasb-e- Hal', 'Mazak Rat', 'Syasi Theater', 'Khabarnak' and 'Darling with Khalid Iqbal Dar' are other popular shows on different news channels. Initially, these shows were aimed to convey information about any

topic in a humorous way. Afterward, these shows were more inclined towards satirical content generally on any topic and specifically on politics. Political satirical shows received an overwhelming response from audiences soon after television channels broadcast these shows.

Satirists have become more empowered now as they usually used to target government and presenting a critique in comedic style and leave a point to ponder such as in a famous comedy program Mazak Rat "When Nirgoli meets Imran Khan" depicting that Prime Minister Imran Khan is organizing low-budget conferences without serving luxurious meals in order to save government funds and Nirgoli who is a comedy character, is disappointed because he used to enjoy these in previous governments. Satirists also target parliamentarians, Government officials, and opposition such as "Yeh Bandhan to iqtidar ka bandhan hy" (This is government sharing relationship) presented in a famous satirical show "Hum Sub Umeed Se Hain" and presenting "After disqualification Nawaz shareef and Maryam Nawaz bow down to Trump for help", "Interpol k zarey Ishaq Dar ki Wapsi, Babloo or uske Chachoo ka haal" (Babloo, the son of Nawaz shareef, is blamed as leaking many secrets foolishly about corruption charges against his own family).

Political satirical shows usually highlight malfunctioning of government, changing statements of the politicians, exaggerated claims made by politicians, politicians' lies spoken to contest elections. Some of these shows highlight social and political problems focusing on the relationship of politicians with voters' problems and promises made by politicians with their voters. All these issues have been satirized by different television channels like Dunya news, ARY digital, Express news, Geo Tv, etc.

With the passage of time, advancement in satire made it more attractive and influential for shaping public opinion. Modern satire takes on many content genres and forms such as cartoons, animations, memes, parody, mimicry, caricatures, allusion, recorded videos, live performances by comedians etc. Today's comedy shows on television are a form of modern age satire. Recorded videos such as Aaloo Anday (Potato and Egg curry) was one of the daring satires which made fun of all political parties in Pakistan.

In Pakistan's social media environment all major political parties have developed their own media cells during election 2013 and they are constantly working on developing content that favors them and highlights their good policies and the content which demote and defame

opposing political parties and political leaders. However, this race is turning to another interesting and pungent phase; social media teams of political parties are working on creative work and constructing political satire by targeting opposing political candidates such as preparing mimicry of political candidates, animated comedy, textual jokes, ridiculing and insulting political characters. Now the situation is that once the race is started, it will continue with greater momentum focusing on more and more satire

The ranking of Pakistan is very high among many other countries in the matter of cyber liberty generally but political satire has never been subject to censorship in Pakistan[53]. It is argued by many social media experts that social media, in general, is free of censorship in Pakistan; no censorship is applied in context to political satire, even as in the case of other mainstream media, social media is also enjoying its supreme power to shatter the political supremacy of government structure. However, in times of political uncertainty and political unrest, the use of political satire on social media by all political parties against each other and against the ruling political party has been even more aggressive and political satirists were more active and aggressive to communicate satirical content on social media plate forms. M. O. Jones (2017) acknowledges today's forms of satire on social media are the response to policies of the authorities.

Creative political satirists no longer feel dependent on state-owned censored communication media or corporate-owned communication media which is under the censorship of the *Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority*. These satirists have their own sphere where they can show their creativity at a maximum level and enjoy appreciation by the public. They are more empowered with freedom of expression. In Pakistan, Social media political satirists are working on the parameters of the self-administered nature of political satire rather than facing any serious censorship conditions. And all political parties while using social media for the purpose of triggering government structure by using satirical texts, memes, pictures, and animations don't observe any kind of media laws or ethical conditions. Such creativity of this cultural production makes it more favorite in the public sphere among social media users.

Some of the examples of social media satire from Pakistan's political environment targeting the political leaders and their narrations, respectively, are given below.

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[53]Online Article can be accessed from Abbasi, W., (2016). Freedom on the Net 2016: Pakistan ranked among 10 worst countries (geo.tv). ('Freedom on the net 2016' Report issued by Google).

Figure 5.1 Portrayal of Social Media Political Satire in Pakistan

Narration of above mimicry: The above mimicry shows that Nawaz Sharif (he is Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan and has been disqualified by Apex court of Pakistan and he is facing the charges of corruption in accountability courts) is being dragged by Prime Minister Imran khan, Chairman Pakistan Tehrik-e Insaf (PTI), for making him accountable in public. This was spread just before Election 2018 and gave the impression that Imran Khan will prove as a savior of the nation and will get the money back which is made through corruption. Khan is famous as the leader of youth in Pakistan. This mimicry is used and shared by the supporters of PTI and became viral on Social media.

Figure 5.2 Portrayal of Social Media Political Satire in Pakistan

Narration of above mimicry: Leaders of other political parties are pushing to discredit Nawaz Sharif (Pakistan Muslim Leagure-N) by beating him showing as he deserves such treatment because his actions, character and policies justify such action. Pakistan's politics has been under turmoil for the last many years but the current government even after being elected democratically has been alleged for election rigging, corruption, making offshore companies. Almost all big names of governing political parties are exposed in PANAMA leaks for having illegal money and offshore companies and now they are facing trials in accountability courts. Pakistan did not enjoy political stability in any era but every government has been subject to agreements with opposition parties sacrificing the interests of the public but this era which started in 2013 faced real opposition by opposition party Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf under the leadership of Imran Khan and made the government accountable in every scandal.

Repeated exposure of the same information and the exposure of the same information from multiple sources encourage the users of that information to think about it and make an opinion. This argument is endorsed by Althaus (2003), he argues that even an indirect and subtle

exposure of information can change the saliency of information and alters public opinion. However, researches show that not all information coming through these sources is equally authentic and equally effective. The diversity in information sources provides enhanced exposure. But to what extent this enhanced exposure due to diversity in information sources may affect the political mobilization process is a question.

Manifested by the pre-existed disruptive quality of satire, this is articulated by challenging the powerful people from politics and from other spheres of life with light stings of humor. Making fun of those who are in power empowers those who are powerless (Aburmishan, 2018). Mentioning the other aspect, Elliott asserts that it's not only about targeting the powerful but also showing a sense of support to the powerless, which are termed as 'unheard people' (1960).

Political scholars recognize authoritarian regimes with common characteristics of barriers in freedom of expression, media censorship, and low level of political participation. Both direct and indirect censorship had a substantial application in authoritarian regimes for every type of content including political satire and satirist had to play a dangerous game in an authoritarian regime, confronting many restrictions and threats as evident through a historical analysis of the use of satire in Germany, Russia, China, Middle East, British ruled India and Latin America. Though authoritarian regimes still exist in many parts of the world and despite the fact that censorship poses threats to satirists, satire has made a significant place in political discourse in authoritarian regimes and continues to play a cat-and-mouse game with censorship. We have also witnessed the interplay of censorship and satire in the authoritarian regimes. We found examples of such countries where censorship has weakened satirical attempts against political regimes (as in the regime of Adolf Hitler in Germany, Stalin in Russia) and where attempts of satire have weakened censorship imposed by authoritarian regimes (as in the case of Pakistan in Pervez Musharraf 's regime, he could not resist political satire against his regime and in the case of Egypt in Mubarak's regime, censorship could not stop caricature printed in books and waving caricature of Mubarak in Tahrir square Cairo) (Freedman, 2011, pp. 87–112).

However, Bassem Yousaf acknowledges some Middle Eastern countries as more tolerant of political satire (Aptaker, 2016, quoted in M. O. Jones, 2017, p. 137). For example, Freedman acknowledges that with little ups and downs, anti-regime satire survived in Egypt more than any other country in Middle East (2011, pp. 87–112) and Wedeen asserts that satirical discourse is

among everyday political contest in Syria, where direct political engagement is discouraged (Wedeen, 2013). Analyzing political satire in authoritarian regimes with a special focus on Russia, Chmel et al., (2018) assert that political information having satirical illustration increases attention to that information as compared to political information or news having standard news illustrations.

In authoritarian regimes where the political critique of serious nature is discouraged and has no space; political satire makes its space, provides information, and starts a forum of discussion. Satirists have been targeting politicians even when there was restricted freedom of expression (M. O. Jones, 2017) and as evident in the case of famous comedian Bassem Youssef of Egypt, who has been initially uploading satirical videos on the internet then hosting a regular comedy show on television.

Satire makes its place in different political setups, whether it is about American democracy (McClennen, 2012) or the emergence of new forms of satire during Behrain uprising (M. O. Jones, 2017). Very rational argument, here, about the application of satire is that it is easier to swallow the reality and to digest and bear the sting of satirists in the curtain of humor. The central argument is to amuse the audience with the hidden agenda of targeting powerful social and political elites (Emma Burnell[54], 2017).

5.7 Operationalization of Political Awareness

According to previous studies, the Conceptualization of the concept of political awareness comprises of (1) Political Interest (2) Political information exchange and knowledge, which leads to the individual's ability to understand the problems of society (Denk & Olson, 2018; Ahmed, 2017). However, in this study, the concept of political awareness is operationalized through some borrowed determinants from other studies, and some other additional elements are also included in the questionnaire, collectively making an index for the analysis.

For example, while analyzing *Awareness through Social Media,* categories which were formulated were awareness about the electoral process, corruption scandals, personal scandals, the performance of political parties, and the validity of social media content.

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Awareness about the political system of Pakistan, politics, political candidates, and political parties is a matter of cognitive abilities of individuals since was a bit difficult to figure out and to know the things which take birth in mind or develop over time as a result of certain phenomena. Measuring political awareness is of a subjective nature to investigate and needs very tactful handling to address it. Given the difficulty in responding to questions about their in-depth discussion due to the inability to recall all discussion, I feared that the respondents may not be able to respond fairly to the questions about their detailed discussion on political issues.

Another issue with measuring political awareness was to measure 'how much a respondent is aware of a certain political issue' because respondents may not be able to answer it adequately or at least one's perception of the measure of 'how much' will potentially differ from that of another respondent. Rather, he could fairly well answer about very explicit statements such as 'I know', I got some new information about…', 'I am aware of..' . However, I relied on focusing the conceptual components of political awareness; respondents' level of interest in politics, the information they got through Social media about political, personal, and corruption scandals, the level of their knowledge about candidates' constituencies, the level of their trust on information communicated through social media.

In an ongoing study, I measured political awareness of university students by measuring political interest, political knowledge, and their discussion, logically connected set of questions were developed on a 5-rating scale in one direction and then combining the responses of all variables, which constitute political awareness, against one respondent to make one index. All these questions will collectively determine the level of individuals' political awareness.

5.8 Conclusion

Concluding the above discussion, we establish theoretical and framework of political awareness under the conditions, that when people are able to choose among the information provided, to discuss among their social networks, and when the orientation to/ and understanding of the political world around them is possible (Lange, 2006). In today's world, social media is a facilitator of above mentioned political attitudes and enhances the opportunities for political understanding. Through the review of literature, I found three indicators that constitute one of dahl's important requirements of the theory of democracy; political interest, political information and knowledge, and sharing of political ideas and views.

Further, I explored the relationship of political satire with political information, knowledge, and awareness. To avoid a single-sided perspective on political satire, i tried to find and focus on the literature from many countries and highlighted the situation of political satire in relationship with the political systems of these countries. However, on political awareness through satirical content I conclude that satirical messages leave hidden effects on audiences; users are knowingly exposed to the content and unknowingly affected. Apparently, they are being amused but secretly they get awareness through political satire. On the basis of previous studies, we fairly assume the notion that exposure to political satirical content, like the other content, also contributes to gaining political information, knowledge, political awareness, and political participation.

5.9 Hypotheses Testing

5.9.1 Hypotheses

H_0: There is no association between social media political expression and the level of political awareness of university students.

H_1: There is an association between social media political expression and the level of political awareness of university students.

Regression Table 5.1 Prediction of Political Awareness

Variable	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	T	Durbin-Watson
Constant		.249	19.026	
Social Media Political Expression	.855*	.016	44.991	1.719

a. Dependent Variable: Political Awareness. The table presents the regression model of social media political expression and political awareness
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.730. Durbin Watson=1.719
Correlation is significant at * $p < .001$; **$p <. .01$; ***$p < .05$.

The statistical inferences provide evidence that does not support the null hypothesis. Hence, H_1 is supported by statistical analysis. As predicted in hypothesis H_1, social media political expression has a significant and positive association ($\beta = .855$, $p < .001$) with political

awareness. It indicates that if social media political expression among university students is increased by one standard deviation, political awareness among university students is increased by 0.855 standard deviations. Regression analysis also supported this model as 73% of variance (Adjusted R^2) in political awareness through social media was explained by variables included in the analysis. For adequate testing of these hypotheses, .05/ .01 level of confidence is used which is considered as standard in social science.

These findings led to another regression model, comprising more than one explanatory variable, to look into the effects of independent variables (control variables) other than the focal independent variable (social media political expression). My investigation of the previous literature suggested many other indicators such as gender, age, study level, study department, family income level, and province, which may influence one's level of political awareness. To know the effect of other independent variables along with social media political expression, another regression model is analyzed.

Table 5.2 shows the standardized regression coefficients along with standard error and value of t-test of all explanatory variables. Regression analysis also supported this model when including other explanatory variables (demographic characteristics of the students). Some of these control variables yielded a low but significant influence on the political awareness of university students in Pakistan. Such as the association of study level of the students with political awareness (β = .039, p < .05) was statistically significant. It indicates that if the study level is increased by one standard deviation, the political awareness among university students is increased by 0.039 standard deviations and this is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables (social media political expression, student age, gender, study department, province, and family income level) are kept constant.

Similarly, the association of the study department with political awareness of the university students (β = .055, p < .01) and the association of the province with political awareness of the university students (β = .036, p < .05) were statistically significant. This is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables, excluding the one which was measured, are kept constant.

The statistical inferences pointed out that the focal independent variable (social media political expression) still remained highly significant and associated (β = .852, p < .001) with political awareness of the university students when the effects of other control variables were

also measured. The variables included in this model accounted for 73.4% of the total variance in political awareness. Study level of the students, study department of the students, and province of the student were proved the only statistically significant control variables in this model. The other control variables in the demographic block such as age, gender, and income level were statistically insignificant and not associated with political awareness.

Regression Table 5.2 Prediction of Political Awareness with Control Variables

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t
Constant		1.402	5.046
Social Media Political Expression	.852*	.017	43.971
Student Age	.020	.048	1.030
Gender of the Student	.001	.183	.066
Study Level of the student	.039***	.083	1.931
Study Department of the student	.055**	.052	2.871
Family Income	-.020	.000	-1.067
Province of the student	.036***	.076	1.898

a. Dependent Variable: Political Awareness.
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.734. Durbin Watson=1.748
Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05.

Table 5.3 presents the regression analysis of demographic variables with their individual response categories. First part of this table represents the standardized regression coefficients of political awareness of male (β = .886, p < .001) and females (β = .792, p < .01). It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of political awareness is increased by 0.886 standard deviations among male university students and .792 among female university students. The value of Durbin-Watson was very well within the range (1.5 - 2.5). The statistics presented in Table 3 revealed that male respondents exhibited a higher level of political awareness as a result of their social media political expression than female respondents.

Second part of Table 5.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of the political awareness of the students from different disciplines. For more accurate and confined analysis of the study department, all study departments were further categorized into two main study disciplines (social science and physical science). This new variable was named as study discipline. The standardized regression coefficients of political awareness of social science students (β = .705, p < .001) and for physical science students (β = .631, p < .01) was noted. It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of political awareness is increased by 0.705 standard deviations among social science students and .631 among physical science students. The value of Durbin-Watson was very well within the range (1.5 - 2.5). It can be inferred that social science students exhibited a higher level of political awareness as a result of their social media political expression than physical science students.

Regression Table 5.3 Prediction of Political Awareness Comparing Gender, Study Discipline, and Province

Variable	Response Categories	Adjusted R^2	Standardized Coefficients[a][b] (β)	Std. Error	T	Durbin-Watson
1-Gender	Male	.785*	.886*	.019	39.138	1.823
	Female	.625*	.792**	.030	23.424	1.637
2-Study Discipline	Social Science	.643*	.705*	.025	26.211	1.616
	Physical Science	.601*	.631*	.020	39.710	1.954
3-Province	Punjab	.727*	.796*	,026	28,261	1,969
	Sindh	.779*	.759*	,032	22,935	1,815
	Khyber Pakhtunkha	.796*	.753*	,031	24,165	1,750
	Balochistan	.621**	.639*	,043	15,659	1,531

a. Dependent Variable: Political Awareness.
b. Predictor: Online Political Expression, Gender, Study Discipline, Province
 Model Summary: Sample size=750. Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05

Third part of Table 5.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of the political awareness of the students from different provinces i. e for the students from the province of Punjab ($\beta = .796$, $p < .001$), the students from the province of Sindh ($\beta = .759$, $p < .001$), the students from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha ($\beta = .753$, $p < .001$) and the students from the province of Balochistan ($\beta = .639$, $p < .001$). It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of political awareness is increased by 0.796 standard deviations among the students of the province of Punjab, 0.759 among students of the province of Sindh, 0.753 in the students of the province of Khyber Pakhtynkha and 0.639 in the students of the province of Balochistan. Statistical analysis showed that the students from the province of Punjab exhibit a little higher level of political awareness than the students of other provinces. Similarly, the analysis revealed that the students from the province of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkha have almost the same level of political awareness as a result of their social media political expression.

The values of Adjusted R^2 give the overall explanation of the model with respect to each category of the variables and the results can be well generalized on the population. Regression analysis also supported these models (Adjusted R^2) in reference to gender, study discipline, and province.

5.9.2 Discussion

In this chapter, I focused on one of the substantial components of Dahl (1989)'s *Theory of Democratic Process*, which is 'the enlightened understanding of the issues'. He argues that people should have equal opportunities to understand issues and concerns. In light of this perspective, this chapter is designed to know how political expression through social media affects political awareness of university students in Pakistan. This study examines the relationship between university students' political use of social media and the level of their political awareness. The formulated hypothesis was "Political expression on social media is associated with political awareness of university students in Pakistan". Further, detailed analysis aimed at measuring the role of intervening variables, such as gender, age, study level, study discipline, family income, and province. According to the purpose and nature of the study, which was mainly to determine the association between social media political expression and political awareness of university students, and to test the hypothesis, inferential statistics were used.

While building the conceptual framework of political awareness in this chapter, I explored the construct of political awareness and its related concepts such as political interest, political discussion, political information, and perceived political knowledge (Khalifa, 2011; Solhaug et al., 2018; Zaller, 1992). This chapter attempts to investigate and disentangle all these concepts which have been conceptualized and operationalized in above mentioned three different dimensions. Although many studies have been carried out on intervening effects of political interest, political discussions, and political information and knowledge on political awareness and participation, however, only a few had taken them as constituent concepts of political awareness (Solhaug et al., 2018). Moreover, very few studies have figured out the direct role of social media political expression on the cumulative index of political awareness which is highlighted through the findings of (Boulianne, 2009, 2015, 2016).

The results from hypothesis testing revealed that there is a positive association between social media political expression and political awareness of the university students in Pakistan. The overall model suggests a high correlation among social media political expression and political awareness as a cumulative index of political interest, political discussion, political information, and perceived political knowledge. The second model of social media political expression including other explanatory variables has also exhibited high significance explaining (73.4 %) of variance, and has a relatively same correlation with political awareness.

In all models of political awareness, whether social media political expression is used as the only predictor or along with other demographic variables, the political use of social media (political expression) has a strong and significant relationship with political awareness. Analyzing gender differences, the study revealed significant and meaningful differences in the political awareness among male and female students as a result of social media political expression i.e. male students exhibited more political awareness as compared to female respondents. Although, there has been found a positive association between awareness level of both male and female for political use of social media, results revealed that the awareness in female students is less which is concluded by the previous literature (i) as a result of patriarchal influence in the society (Amer, 2009), and (ii) gendered socialization process over a life span is responsible for thirty percent less political orientation of women as compared to men (Fraile & Sánchez-vítores, 2020).

Further, the results also revealed that social science students who had more exposure to social media political expression were little more politically aware than physical science students. The difference in political awareness of the students from different study disciplines was endorsed by other authors too (Jarrar & Hammud, 2018). Here, it is noteworthy that the study figured out other significant differences in social science and physical science students in terms of their general social media use, political use of social media, the level of their interest in politics and the frequency of their political discussions, which ultimately account for political awareness.

In the same manner, as observed in the case of gender and study discipline, province wise differences were also noted in the level of political awareness. The students from the province of Punjab tend to have more political awareness as a result of social media political expression. The students from the province of Balochistan exhibited the lowest level of political awareness as a result of their social media political expression. However, this difference is due to many reasons based on the conceptual framework and previous literature (i) as stated by Samad (2014) and Aman & Akram (2018), Balochistan is suffering from socio-political unrest conditions such as economic deprivation, lack of political will by local politicians and federal dominancy over the province" which may result in less active participation of the students of Balochistan in the democratic national political process (ii) strongly integrated tribal system and traditions coupled with the local politics in Balochistan are the causes which prevent the people of Balochistan to be the part of the national political process (iii) female students' less use of general and political social media as compared to the female students from other provinces. The analysis validates the conceptualization of political awareness from previous literature that early political experiences and orientation define the basis of one's level of political awareness (De Vibe et al., 2018).

Political interest has been evaluated by asking the respondents about their level of interest in politics. Altogether, 36% of respondents showed a high interest in politics, 44% of respondents were 'slightly to somehow' interested in politics and 20% of respondents were found to be not at all interested in politics. It implies that there is a sufficient majority of students who have political interests which helps enhancing political awareness to strengthen democratic norms. Political interest is one of the important indicators of political awareness and a predictor of respondents' level of awareness (R. Ali & Fatima, 2016; Amer, 2009). Though there appeared to be a sizeable percentage of both male and female students who showed no interest in politics,

the percentage of female students was high as compared to male students. In the review of literature, I figured out many socio-economic conditions such as inflation, law, and order situation in the country and many political conditions such as continuous unsatisfactory deliverance by political parties one after the other, thus, making people desperate and hopeless and ultimately resulting in less interest in politics. The model suggests that political use of social media is related to respondents' political interest and according to the design of a suggested model of political awareness, the association between political use of social media and political interest contributes to the cumulative index of political awareness.

Findings revealed that social media political expression is playing a significant and positive role in defining political interest. Those who have greater social media political expression have a greater interest in politics. As political interest is a constituent module of political awareness, thus, social media political expression has an association with greater political awareness of university students. However, in the case of male and female differences, male students have more political interest than female students, which, on the other hand, is also because of the difference in their level of social media political expression. Female respondents are less engaged in political expression on social media as compared to male respondents.

Political discussion was another measuring indicator of political awareness. Political discussion was assessed and evaluated with the literature support (Khalifa, 2011) by simply asking the respondents about the frequency of their discussions on political issues with their family, friends, or others. The findings suggested that the political use of social media encourages political discussions on social media (online setting) and offline settings such as classroom, home, etc. Those who have greater social media political expression are more likely to discuss political issues in online and offline settings, which ultimately determine university students' level of political awareness. The study findings reported that 46% of students were engaged in discussing political issues in online and offline settings with their friends, family, and teachers. 42% were those who discussed political issues infrequently, whereas, only 12 % of students never discussed political issues at all. Less percentage of the students who did not at all engage in political discussions depict that even those students who are not at all interested in politics seem to participate in group discussions on political issues. The political use of social media not only facilitates but encourages online and offline political discussions among its users. Social media has provided a new public space for the students to discuss politics (Dimitrova et

al., 2014; Papacharissi, 2002) and to sustain a democratic political system. Social media, as a whole, appear more accessible and facilitating to the average citizen (Bucy & Gregson, 2001). However, the male and female differences throughout the study have been meaningful. Female students are less engaged in political discussions as well, as compared to male students.

Third very important indicator of political awareness is political information and knowledge. To investigate the informational content of Facebook and Twitter communication and to comprehend its relationship with political awareness of the university students, the students were asked to show the degree of their agreement upon the information they got through these social media platforms. Many authors credit political information and knowledge as key measures in analyzing political awareness and most often political information and political knowledge have been taken as a synonym (Pastarmadzhieva, 2016, p. 19). Whereas, some have suggested that on the receipt of information, the level of knowledge increases (Barabas et al., 2012). Respondents were asked if they got the information about the constituencies of political candidates through these platforms. The results revealed that more than 43% of students got information about constituencies of political candidates, while, 25 % of students did not get any information about constituencies of political candidates, and the rest of the students were neutral about the question. For the items related to the information about corruption scandals and performance, the degree of agreement was much higher than the degree of disagreement. These findings imply that most of the students agree that they receive information about corruption scandals and the performance of political candidates and political parties through social media, regardless of the communicative path i.e. either the information comes through the official account and pages of political parties and candidates or from their friends' circle.

The reason behind the students' disagreement on information about candidates' constituencies through social media possibly lies in the arguments presented by Lee & Xenos (2019) and Jost et al., (2018) that (i) though, social media platforms are used for political purposes i.e. news and information, but these do not cover political issues in a broader spectrum as other news sources do, (ii) social media structure allows patterns of selectivity about which information to choose and which information to quickly skip (iii) social media serves as an echo chamber of like-minded people to allow information of their interest to be received and communicated through like-minded friends on the network. However, despite the argument that social media has the ability to foster an echo chamber of like-minded friends (Jost et al., 2018),

the chance of being accidentally exposed to random information, that does not come from like-minded sources, cannot be ignored. Y. Kim & Chen, (2016) and Valenzuela et al., (2012) argue that, although its impact is not as high as of direct exposure, it influences political learning.

In general, the analysis suggests that the political expression of both facebook and twitter has a direct and positive association with political information and knowledge, which is also endorsed by the findings of Alamai (2017). However, the political expression of facebook was more correlated with political information and knowledge as compared to the political expression of twitter. Nevertheless, I came across the counter findings which do not support the findings of this research (Lee & Xenos, 2019) probably because they took under investigation a series of questions on factual knowledge, and the implications of factual knowledge may differ from that of perceived knowledge.

Chapter 6. Political Expression on Social Media and Voting Behavior

6.1 Introduction

Elections are the manifestation of the democratic process as they represent the political choice of people. However, elections and voting behavior of the people should be analyzed in context to both the political and social systems of the country (Mackenzie, 1958). The theoretical support for this chapter is built on mainly the 'Theory of democracy' taken from the book 'Democracy and its critics' by Dahl (1989). Emphasizing democracy as the rule by the people, Dahl specifies the requirements of the democratic process; effective participation, voting equality, and enlightened understanding. He asserts that the citizens are an integral part of the decision-making process in democracy and they should have provided the equal opportunity to take part in the democratic process via the above-mentioned requirements of democracy. A very substantial requirement of a democratic process is voting equality. An ideal democracy also provides an equal right for all citizens to vote for their choices. In collective decisions, all citizens should have equal participation to express their choice and equal weight to the choices of all citizens should be given.

Nevertheless, it is believed that the political and the social systems, to which an individual belongs, hold multiple factors that influence the voting decision of an individual member. These multifaceted influences are figured out by political scholars as caste, race, class, religion, ideology, family, opinion leaders, and many others (Campbell et al., 1960; Haider, 2017; Lazarsfeld et al., 1944; Visser, 1996; Wilder, 1999). It is observed that the electoral behavior of an individual voter is influenced by at least one or many of these influences, hence determining the voting trends.

Voting behavior is also considered as an indicator of how effectively the democratic process runs and has been a subject of discussion for many political scholars throughout the world (Dahlgren, 2012; Jamil Ahmed et al., 2010; Kamau, 2017; Liaqat et al., 2018; Loader & Mercea, 2012; Sadiq et al., 2014; Sokhey & McClurg, 2012b). To know about the trends and effects on voting decisions, these influences have been under consideration for the evaluation of voters' voting behavior (A. Ahmed, 2014; Haider, 2017; Usman et al., 2013). To build a theoretical foundation of the phenomenon, I am more concerned to have deep insight, at an earlier step, into the political and social determinants affecting electoral behavior of general

voters worldwide and, later, into political and social determinants affecting electoral behavior of Pakistani voters especially.

6.2 Determinants of Voting Behavior: A Theoretical Approach

Very early studies of voting behavior are marked by three major schools of thoughts: Columbia school of thought (Sociological Model) which has reference to the publications ''The People's Choice'' by Lazarsfeld et al. (1944), ''Voting'' by Berelson et al. (1954) and ''Personal Influence'' by Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955), Michigan School of thought (Psychosocial Model) has major reference to the publication ''The American Voter'' by Campbell et al. (1960) and Rochester School of thought referred to as Rational Choice theory (Model of Economic voting) which has reference to the work of Anthony Downs ''An Economic Theory of Democracy'' (1957). These studies put great focus on the voting behavior of individual voters based upon a wide range of social, psychological, and need-based influences.

Building a theoretical perspective of the voting behavior of Pakistani Voters in the light of Sociological Model, Psychosocial Model and Rational Choice theory which is referred to as Model of Economic voting would help us understand and establish the implications of these Models in Pakistani Setting more firmly.

6.2.1 Sociological Determinants of Voting Behavior and their Implications

The sociological model is built on the argument that voter's social neighborhood and membership of other groups have a strong influence over the voting behavior of an individual. Lazarfeld et al. (1944) studied in detail the political homogeneity of social groups i.e. the association between voter's electoral behavior and the social groups he belonged to, and reach the conclusion that social characteristics determine political preference. Series of experiments that employed different research methodologies concluded that apart from early predispositions, the change in voter choice was not due to a political candidate but due to members of the community (Antunes, 2010, p. 147). In the next step, the role of electoral campaigns in activating the indifferent voters, strengthening links with a political party, and the conversion of undecided voters was analyzed. A very minimal effect was found with 8% of voters who changed their position because of the election campaigns. However, here, again Lazarfelds et al. (1968) found

the role of social groups very crucial as it identified the role of opinion leaders in between mass media communication used for election campaigns and the voters (p.148).

An individual voter in an ideal democratic society is supposed to be empowered with political information and knowledge no matter what his political beliefs are: what the real issues of majority are, what are the solutions and alternatives, what are democratic and non-democratic consequences of a certain current or past issue, and a rational argument about whether a political candidate is capable of resolving this issue. Lazarsfeld et al. (1954) identified certain features of the political well-being of voters in a democratic socio-political system such as having political interest and knowledge, discussion, and political motivation. Further, they conclude that empirical investigations suggest voter's limited interest or motivation on political issues. Although, these findings implied to a traditional American voter of that time and there is also a probability that these outcomes may vary from society to society depending upon many individualistic and collective factors.

Such standards are difficult to meet also in traditional Pakistani voters. Many studies (Akhtar, 2012; Jamil Ahmed et al., 2010) reinforce this argument and suggest that most of the voters in Pakistan do not cast their votes on the basis of these principles but on some other sociological factors as explained by Lazarsfeld et al. (1954) in the model. They also explain that voters in America do not cast their votes for some reason but to conform or to fit in one's social group. Even the voters who believe they cast their vote based on some reason, they make a decision on the collective reason of their group not on the basis of one's own reason.

Though, the sociological model provides strong theoretical grounds for electoral studies in the past and in the current era also. Nevertheless, it is also true that the studies are conducted setting particular parameters and not all studies, always, are measured on the same parameters. The parameters of the studies conducted in Columbia school may have changed up till now. However, we should reevaluate the sociological determinants of electoral behavior in today's social context because of many reasons; because the parameters of the formation of social groups and individualistic characteristics are not the same as were in 1944, second, because the patterns of information production and consumption by the members of social groups have changed i. e today's empowered voter is involved in the process of consumption and production at the same time, third, because the technological developments have made communication more complex technologically but facilitated interactivity and flexibility in communication process among the

members of social groups and forth because in a high choice media environment, the members of the social groups have many alternative sources of information i.e. receive information from multiple sources, and they are more empowered than the voters of that time when the study was conducted.

Among other sociological factors that define voting behavior of an individual, peer group and family members also determine voting behavior. Gavin Stamp, a political reporter of BBC states that one-third of young adults claim that their voting decisions are influenced by their family members and peer groups[55]. According to Kudrnáč & Lyons, (2017), the young voters who live with their parents, are influenced by their parents for voting. Family influences are among the sociological determinants of voting behavior, which are discussed in the Colombia and Michigan model. In the social and political context, these influences are categorized into two different types of influences; decide to vote and decide whom to vote. Gidengil et al., (2016) demonstrate that the turnout of the adult voting has a strong association with parental voting. The most influential social pressure is from within the household (André Blais et al., 2019). For most young adults, the family is the most influential determinant in the democratic participation of youth i.e. voting (Edwards et al., 2006). However, these researches validate family as a positive contributor to political learning, especially, voting of a young voter. Nevertheless, the situation takes another turn when this voting determinant i.e. family, influences the voting decisions of a young voter. However, the central point here is the interconnections between the individuals and their families; family is most likely to influence the individual's attitudes and choices of voting.

In the context of sociological determinants, that identified the concept of opinion leaders, the role of canvasser as a communicator in influencing the electoral behavior of a social group is also important. Many studies explained the relationship of canvasser and target groups within one social group in context to voters' turnout. In another study, discussing the importance of personal relationships with other members of social groups, Sinclair et al., (2013) conclude empirically, that canvassers from the same social group have more effect on voters' turnout. Conversely, Gerber & Green (2000) conclude that, notwithstanding the existing credibility, the conventional behavior of canvasser is failed to establish further trust.

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[55] Article can be accessed from Stamp, G., (2010). *BBC News - Election: How do friends and family influence votes?*

Many scholars criticized sociological model for just explaining the long-term consistency of voting behavior and ignoring the voting behaviors which vary from one election to another and the voting behavior of individuals who vote differently being in a certain social group or the voting behavior of the individuals who belong to different social groups. Considering these limitations, the sociological model emphasizes a study of voting behavior not only from voter's perspective but also from contextual factors including political programs of parties, the economic situation in a country, and the political structure of a country (Curtice, 2002; Glasgow & Alvarez, 2005; Van Der Eijk, 2002 quoted in Antunes, 2010)

6.2.2 Psychological Determinants of Voting Behavior and their Implications

Michigan model based on psychological factors used the concept of partisanship to overcome the limitations of the Columbia model by jointly exploring sociological long term factors and socio-political short term factors which influence voting behavior and election results (Antunes, 2010, p. 153). The Psychological model also emphasizes to study an individual as a primary voting unit for the analysis of electoral behavior but in context to political partisanship. According to this concept, partisanship is a psychological association of an individual with the political party which does not guarantee a firm relation with the political party such as registration of casting vote for it (Antunes, 2010). According to Campbell et al.(1960) and Miller & Shanks (1996), partisanship creates through social orientation with reference groups to whom he does not belong but get associated by acting upon the social rules of the group. In nutshell, political partisanship comes through the connection of individuals who have an association with certain political parties. Michelson (2003) determines that increased voters' turnout is observed under conditions when canvasser and other members of the group have the same ethnicity and political partisanship.

One major weakness in the election and electoral behavior studies has been noticed, that most of the previous researches focused more on political parties and election campaigns and ignoring voter's perspective. However, Merril iii & Grofman (1999) in the book '*A Unified Theory of Voting: Directional and Proximity spatial Models'*, discussed electoral behavior in terms of, both, voter's preference and candidate's strategy. Voter's choice is based on voter's belief about the utility of the object, policy stance of the candidate, and evaluation of a candidate's policy stance by the voter. The involvement of voters in the electoral process is the

basic and key measure to assess voting behavior. Palmer (1975) in his book *'Elections and political development: The south Asian Experience'*, defines the hierarchy of political participation in terms of voter involvement, from low involvement to high involvement; Apathetic, Spectator, transitional and Gladiatorial activities. He very well operationalized these levels to collect empirical evidence from the phenomenon of the voting behavior of voters. He explained that the level of voter involvement in the electoral process and decision about voting corresponds to his attachment with the political party or candidate (p.62).

6.2.3 Rational Choice Determinants of Voting Behavior and their Implications

In the Rational Choice Model, Downs posits that aggregate of public opinion is a building block of democracy and he further claims that electoral behavior can be investigated through voter's self-interest and rational choice (Downs, 1957). However, the opposite argument cannot be ignored, for example, partisanship influences the voting behavior of an individual when there is homogeneity in party affiliation and the policy proposals of a political party (Harrop & Miller, 1987). They put the bases of political partisanship on rational choices of voters. It cannot be underestimated that if speech content, policy proposals, or even the candidate himself is entirely opposite to what a voter thinks about his interests and needs, then there is a greater tendency that a voter may go for an alternative political option. In this situation, however, I propose that the role of partisanship in voting behavior should be reevaluated in reference to the rational choice model. Nonetheless, the psychosocial model, at this point, takes a firm stand that, even in this scenario, this circumstantial and situational change in voting behavior will not change partisanship; hence, they keep their identity.

According to Downs model, rationality is the center point for both voters and political parties. It emphasizes that both the voters and the political parties act according to their own interests and needs. Political parties do not run election campaigns using amateur techniques but their main agenda is to seek prestige and to win ultimately power and this is possible only if political parties are able to convince their voters about their agenda and are able to win maximum votes. In turn voter's voting behavior demands rational satisfaction of their needs and interests from available political parties (1957).

The scholarship discussed in Rational Choice theory is true in societies where true democratic values prevail; people are active members of the political process and vigilantly

participate in political activities, and people not only think rationally but act rationally too. In a bi-partisan political scenario, it is very easy to deceive a voter by speech just before elections and then passing the rest of five years enjoying and working on their own interests and ignoring the interests of their voters. As a response to this disappointment, voters turn their focus on other political party repeating the same in the next election. We have witnessed this political deception for decades in Pakistan's political setup where Pakistan peoples' party(PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League (PML) were the only two national-level political parties and have been overcoming power alternatively from 1988 to 2013 (PPP from November 1988 to August 1990; PML from October 1990 to April 1993; PPP from October 1993 to November 1996; PML from February 1997 to October 1999; PML-Q from October 2002 to October 2007; PPP from February 2008 to end of 2012)[56] (Adeney, 2017; Hashim, 2013; asiasociety.org). Hence based upon this argument, the implication of rationality seems to become faded and rational voting behavior seems workable to some extent in a Bi-partisan political setup. However, Downs 'argument can be materialized when there are a number of options available to choose from (Downs, 1957).

Downs's standard Rational Choice Model was adopted by many other scholars and implemented as an extension in their studies. Riker & Ordeshook (2009, 1968) took Down's idea to design a model for a voting decision whose primary assumption was that individuals vote when they think that their expected benefits from 'voting' are higher than their expected benefits from 'not voting'. Ferejohn & Fiorina (1975) in their Rational Choice framework of voting behavior suggest that individuals vote not because of perceived benefits of voting but because of 'minimum regret criterion', that is to avoid regrets from 'not voting'. They further assert that this decision criterion has higher voters' turnout in larger elections. Farber (2010) developed Rational Choice Model based upon Downs' standard model to analyze voting behavior in union representative elections. Using available data from elections 1972-2009, he found consistency in most of his findings with Downs' model. In addition, he suggests that over 80% of the individuals vote in the elections without considering that their vote will be pivotal and among others, the likelihood of voting reduces when election size increases, and the likelihood of voting increases when there is expected closeness in election results. Nevertheless, this argument also cannot be ignored that an individual's voting behavior is influenced by the motivation that

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[56]Online article can be accessed from Pakistan: a political timeline | Infographic News | Al Jazeera

participation in the online campaign and electoral process will eventually make a difference and their vote can bring change (Delli Carpini, 2000).

Establishing theoretical bases on the Rational choice model, A. Chaudhry, (2018) analyzed the relationship of voting turnout with literacy, households' satisfaction with parties' service delivery, and households' economic perception as compared to previous years and found increasing voters' turnout with increasing literacy and strong perception about economic betterment.

Empirically supporting the Rational Choice Model, Dalton & Wattenberg (1993) suggest that voters' choice of a particular political candidate is influenced by rational thinking that the party's objectives should be compatible with their own. However, this seems not to be a rational approach in an economic sense, rather political rationality (Visser, 1996, pp. 43–52). However, psychologists explain it as with the concept of "semi-rationality" a blend of rational choices with psychological influences which are termed as "mental constructs (Visser, 1994a, pp. 43-52). Merrill Iii & Grofman, (1999) also analyzed the electoral behavior of voters in terms of voters' preferences and candidates' strategy. They put bases of their analysis on Anthony Downs' Proximity Spatial Model, which describes interdependence between decisions of political parties and of voters.

Downs's thesis seems to be very scholastic and based upon ground realities in most of the democratic political setups. Nevertheless, it was not exempt from criticism. For example, Uhlaner, (1989), Green & Shapiro (1994) pointed out methodologically weak points while doing 'selection, use, and interpretation of selected data' in the Rational Choice Model. Another Critic Blais et al., based upon strong methodological grounds in his study, presented another scholarship. He states that half of the voters cast their votes without doing cost and benefit calculation, but they consider it a duty. And those who, even, do not consider it a duty does not pay attention to the cost and benefits of voting; hence rational choice model weakens (2000, pp. 181–201).

I, somehow, believe that generally, the voting behavior of an individual is an outcome of, more or less, the combination of all three models of voting behavior. By and large, the political personality of a voter is inclined towards sociological, psychosocial, and economic factors. However, given that many scholars have regarded sociological factors, predominantly, a major cause which influence the voting behavior of the majority of Pakistani voters, the sociological

model is the focus of empirical investigations of this study. Moreover, the political culture in Pakistan is dominated by these socio-cultural aspect such as biradri, peers, and family; that is why I selected sociological factors among other factors as the part of empirical investigations.

6.3 History of Elections and the Determinants of Electoral Behavior in Pakistan

The Provinces of Punjab, Sindh, and NWFP (now named as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) in Pakistan, when these were the part of British-ruled India, have got the experience of elections in 1937 and 1946. After the partition of the sub-continent, provincial elections were observed in Punjab and NWFP in 1951, in the province of Sindh in 1953, and in Bengal in 1954 (Akhtar, 2012). However, the first general elections were announced after the first constitution in Pakistan in 1956. For the reason that elections have not been conducted at regular intervals in Pakistan, the transition from one democratic regime to another democratic regime has not been smooth.

Regardless of the question that how free and fair these elections were, nevertheless, these contributed to the electoral consciousness of the general masses in Pakistan. Although in PPP-PML led bi-partisan political structure, the spectrum of political consciousness was limited. I found few studies on elections and the conduct of elections, but these are either lacking concrete methodological and theoretical perspectives or having limited perspective (Jamil Ahmed et al., 2010; Butt & Awang, 2017b; Durre-E-Shawar & Asim, 2012; Tufail et al., 2015). The literature on voters' preferences and social and psychological aspects behind their preferences is very limited. And based upon these studies the analysis of the influences on voter choice and voters' electoral behavior was difficult. According to Akhtar, (2012), the dearth and immaturity of research about 'electoral and voting' behavior and election conduct in the political setup of Pakistan are due to irregular conduct of elections. These phenomena cannot be comprehensively studied where the elections are not conducted at regular intervals. However, I tried to look into the broader horizon of studies from many other countries and political setups too.

Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee replicated the study and analyzed presidential elections in 1948 to have a deep insight over social differentiation in groups. The results published in 1954 in ''Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign'' reinforced greater social and physical proximity between members of groups. Electoral cleavage is maintained in social groups on the basis of class, ethnic and ecological divisions. According to Barelson et al. (1954, p.75), these characteristics are present in contemporary America too.

Social determinants of electoral behavior identified by scholars are present in every society having minor variations and voter's voting behavior should also be analyzed in this perspective.

In Pakistan's socio-political scenario, the society is divided in social groups on the bases of caste, class, and religion. This social differentiation is important to look at as a precondition for the analysis of electoral behavior (Mentioned in Antunes, 2010, pp. 149–150).

The true spirit of democracy is met when people are free in their choice to elect electoral representatives, people do vote but their choices are influenced by many social and political pressures imposed by such as politicians, landlords, tribal heads, and biradries. Parochial approach towards national and local issues has changed the parameters of political choices during elections which ultimately affected the democratic process. Moreover, economic issues and poor law and order situation in the country has made the focus of the voters very narrow. According to Haider (2017), parochialism, multiculturalism, and socio-cultural diversification have changed the democratic discourse. However, the study of democracy requires a thorough examination of the political system of the country and its election conduct. Therefore I assume that if the political system and the election conduct in Pakistan are influenced by the pressures mentioned above, then the standard form of democracy is difficult to achieve.

Many previous studies conclude that the voting behavior of an ordinary voter in Pakistan has been characterized by 'focus on local and personal issues' rather than 'national and collective issues (Haider; 2017; Rais, 1985). Political researcher and analyst Rasul Bakhsh Rais discussing non-party elections of 1985 states that 'ignorance of national issue and importance of local issues' is the general behavior of Pakistani voter. Moreover, in rural areas especially campaigns are dominated by influences of candidates, caste/ biradri, ties to the clan, pressures of feudal setups (Rais, 1985). Though this argument was not supported by empirical evidence, but meanwhile and afterward many researchers analyzed the effects of caste/ biradri and feudal set up on voting behavior and found strong influences of these determinants on the voting behavior of non-urban voters (A. Ahmed, 2014; Jamil Ahmed et al., 2010; Haider, n.d.). Moreover, with a broader conceptualization of ethnicity i.e. tribes, races, caste, and nationalities, Butt & Awang (2017b) found the likelihood of voting of urban and non-urban voters on the basis of above mentioned ethnic indicators.

In the socio-political tradition of Pakistan, It has been observed that the endorsements from family members and friends' networks have a greater influence on voting and voting

decisions i.e. whom to vote. Family, friends, caste, and feudal pressures are considered as the traditional norms of voting in Pakistan. From the past literature, I found a great influence of caste, biradri, and feudal factors on voting decisions. A family structure in Pakistani society is closed bounded; younger children stay with their parents and in most cases, married children and their parents also stay with each other, either at their parents' house or at the children's house. However, according to the viability of Kudrnáč & Lyons (2017)'s argument in the family structure of Pakistan, it seems quite logical that most of the adult children face influences from the family, as they used to stay with their parents. They further regard it as the transmission of social values from one generation to another. A. Ahmad et al. (2020) 's findings also revealed that both sociological determinants; biradri and family, influence the voting decisions of the voters of rural Punjab.

Political determinant such as election campaigns of political parties, party manifesto, political leaders and candidates, and political electoral activities, to analyze electoral behavior, have been under considerable debate among many researchers from the 1970s to onward (Burki & Baxter, 1975; Waseem, 1994; Ziring, 1977) but social determinants from the perspective of voter such as voter's needs, motivations, preferences, and criteria for the selection of particular candidates requires consideration to evaluate voter's voting behavior. Charles H. Kennedy in his article about politics of Sindh province, states that "people are more prone to their traditional biases and attachments instead of relieving themselves from the undue burden of malign tendencies which hinder the growth of free liberal ideas and institution[57]"(Kennedy, 2016, pp. 938–955). According to Kennedy, the voting behavior of voters of Sindh is above the quest of their needs and interests (1991). Nevertheless, we argue here that this kind of voting behavior is not limited to Sindhi voters but the shreds of empirical evidence from researches on the voting behavior of the voters of other provinces especially for the province of Punjab conclude the same results (Akbar Leghari et al., 2020; Haider, 2017). The impact of caste/ biradri system on voting behavior in Pakistan was investigated by many other scholars (Wildar, 1999; Ziring, 2000, mentioned in Akhtar, 2012; Haider, 2017; Akbar Leghari et al., 2020) and found a strong influence of 'Zat'(caste) and biradri on electoral and political process of the province of Punjab (Wildar, 1999, mentioned in Akhtar, 2012). The non-urban people from the province of Punjab

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[57] The article was originally published in 1991 and uploaded in 2016.
Kennedy, C. H., (1991). The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh. Vol. 31, No. 10 (Oct., 1991), pp. 938-955 Published by: University of California Press

in Pakistan accept authoritarian rule which is the product of multiculturalism, caste/ biradri system, and parochial political culture (Ziring, 2000; Haider, 2017). The strong impact of biradrism is found in the political alignment of the people of Punjab. Although national-level politics does not follow these trends as much as local politics does; regional and local politics and candidates use the favors of major biradries to win their constituencies (M. Ahmed, 2008; Sadiq et al., 2014). A study conducted in two major districts of Punjab revealed that voting behavior is found to be influenced by the sociological model coupled with the authoritarian rule that is, the structure of society itself does not allow free will to be executed for casting vote rather strict guidelines are imposed by authoritarian personalities such as feudal lords to influence voting decisions (Jamil Ahmed et al., 2010).

Caste system has been very influential in the rural politics of Pakistan, since 70% of the population of Pakistan lives in rural areas and the effects of caste/ biradri and the feudal system can not be ignored in the political system and electoral process of Pakistan. This major proportion of the population of Pakistan is more likely to exhibit passive political behavior (Haider, 2017; Wilder, 1999). Moreover, the caste and feudal system, at a specific level, have strong connectedness with each other. Feudal lords, who are called 'Zamindar' and 'Jagirdar' are authoritative on general masses of their area and put a strong influence on their political affiliations. As they already have passive political behavior and parochial approach towards politics and national issues, feudal lords well understand their weakness and exploit their needs. Feudal system in the politics of Pakistan is influential in elections in two ways; (1) Feudal lords put influence on people, who work on their land and are dependent on them for their even smaller needs. (2) They put influence on the people who belong to the same caste and biradri and exploit their sentiments in the name of caste and biradri. In contrast to the above discussion, Waseem (1994) argues that increasing awareness has lead voters of Pakistan to participate in an electoral activity based on the delivery system associated with their needs.

Many studies explored voting determinants from Pakistan's electoral perspective, but their focus of the research was limited to particular constituencies (A. G. Chaudhry et al., 2014; Jamil Ahmed et al., 2010), provincial level (M. Ahmed, 2008; Burki & Baxter, 1975; Gine & Mansuri, 2011; Haider, 2017). While going through the literature on electoral behavior and election conduct in Pakistan, unfortunately, the dearth of broader research horizon in the perspective of the political setup of Pakistan is observed.

Baxter discussed the voting phenomenon from the perspective of political parties, their campaigns, and party manifesto through which they try to attract voters. Moreover, he highlighted that the established administrative patterns, in which election is conducted, also affect voting behavior (1971). Earlier studies like Baxter and Burki (1975) clearly indicate the limited and selected political inclination towards a two-party political setup, either PPP or Awami League, and afterward toward PPP and PML. While ignoring its connectivity with the other factors such as "availability of choosing out of limited options of political parties for voter for decades and lacking empirical evaluation of voter's perception in this concern. Akhtar (2012) in the meta-analysis of many other studies critically analyzes Ziring's study (1977) for studying electoral activity. Akhtar criticizes this study for ignoring empirical evidence for the evaluation of the role of political parties in electoral activity and just emphasizing political determinants and ignoring other perspectives such as voter preferences (Akhtar, 2012, pp. 283–295).

In electoral behavior and election studies, evaluating the effectiveness of short term factors such as election campaign, image and personality of candidates and party leaders or single-issue voting behavior and long-term factors such as the geography of the voter, social class, policy voting or ethnicity have also been under investigation. Comparing long term and short term influences of voting behavior which directly or indirectly affect the electoral process, Lilleker & Jackson, (2011) state that previously what election studies enlightened were that election campaigns have either very little or no effect on electoral behavior of voters, rather electoral behavior is influenced by long term factors which shape up the political mindset. Moreover, political and economic stability determine the election outcome; they explain this argument as if the economy is going well in a particular era, that candidate may get the benefit and this has nothing to do with what candidates said or did during election campaigns. Contrary to the above, a study on the American presidential elections suggests that election campaigns have an impact, but may not be the primary one in determining electoral behavior, what happens before or during the election campaigns affect the election results (Holbrook, 1996; Campbell, 2000). However, the studies on US elections support this argument.

Hazarika, (2015) and Akhter & Ahmad Sheikh (2014) investigated the determinants of the voting behavior of Indian voters and found notable effects of irrational factors on the minds of voters such as pressures groups like religion and communal factors, image and charismatic personality of a political leader or candidates, and the influence of money. They correspond their

finding to the Columbia and Michigan Model in which the influence of 'social and environmental factors' and psychological factors was stressed.

The goal of this study here is to investigate the factors which motivate people to move from limited and individualistic interests to broader and collective interests so as to experience a collective action towards democratic political participation in the form of increased voter turnout and right voting decision. From the above analysis of many pieces of research, we conclude that caste and biradri still continue to occupy a very significant place in the electoral process of rural areas in Pakistan. But now it seems that the situation has a bit changed in urban areas because of the changing established social order or dominance, weakening influence of feudal lords, and because of the intervention and greater subversive power of mainstream media, in general, and social media, in particular, in creating awareness and undermining social evils. However, in this chapter, I seek to explore the effectiveness of youngsters' facebook and twitter use in altering the traditional electoral behavior (traditional social and political behaviors) to participate in the democratic electoral process of Pakistan.

Transparency in political discourse is possible by a transparent flow of information and unbiased coverage. Nevertheless, in the age of mass media when democratic governments and politicians use it to simulate the political virtues of transparency, this may distort true political values (Vikul, 2016, docsity.com). Though, many previous studies argue the role of both, print and broadcast media, as a 'watchdog' in the political and especially electoral process. Moreover, a plethora of studies also analyzed the potentials of traditional mass media in the efficacy of election campaigns (Abrams & Settle, 2019; Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos, 2019; Van Aelst et al., 2017). A partial or biased media can shape election and issue coverage to support corporate interests or provide propaganda for authoritarian regimes, subverting important democratic principles like freedom of speech and the press. However, 'how a partial and biased private media can shape political process with biased issue coverage to facilitate corporate interests in democratic regimes and as a propaganda tool for authoritarian regimes, crushing democratic political norms' is important to understand the potentials of alternate media (Zafar, 2014; Mezzera & Sial, 2010; Van Dijk, 1993; Habermas, 1962). This argument has been discussed in previous chapters in detail (Chapter 2, Social Media: A New Public Sphere). However democratic political development is achieved in the presence of an unbiased and transparent flow of information, freedom of expression, and free open discussions. Social media, in comparison to

other mass media, is a liberal platform that facilitates its users to communicate and discuss openly and freely, and eventually, contributes to forming citizens who are vigilant and who think and act rationally. Not only for a voter as a focal point, social media play a significant part in determining electoral behavior through social media campaign knowledge and intercommunity communication during elections (Drew & Weaver, 2004; Jamil, 2018; Munir, 2018; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003), but also for political parties to persuade floating or undecided voters or maintaining a repertoire of their expected decided voters.

I found many national and international studies that studied social media as an information source and effects of the political use of social media on electoral behavior of voters (Munir, 2018; Ohme et al., 2016; Riezebos et al., 2011), electoral behavior of US voters (Hyun & Kim, 2015; Kim & Khang, 2014; Bode et al., 2014; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010; Valenzuela et al., 2012) and politicians' use of social media for campaigning (Stieglitz et al., 2012; Stier et al., 2018). But we also noticed that less has been studied about the intermediating role of social media in explaining sociological, psychological, and need-based determinants of voting behavior. However, this is hypothesized that the political use of social media; social networking sites and microblogging services have changed traditional voting trends in the voting decisions by changing the political behavior of individuals in recent years.

Given that this new culture of participation by young people in the political process is enhancing day by day, the role of social media in a move from parochialism to national political thinking is also getting research attention and has been emphasized by many media scholars hypothesizing that it has directly influenced the political mindset of people in Pakistan (Butt & Awang, 2017; Ohme et al., 2016; Sadiq et al., 2018). Moreover, the argument that due to progressive weakening of the connection of voters to political parties (Mohmand, 2014) which questions the 'stability of partisanship' and 'progressive misalignment of voters in selection of political parties' need reevaluation after the subversive role of social media communication which enables today's voter to be in contact with political candidates and can question and argue them on issues of concern.

Social media in some cases, not in all, can be taken as a predictor of election campaigns and election results and can provide a quantitative indication about voting trend and voting behavior of the people (DiGrazia et al., 2013; Riezebos et al., 2011). Voting is considered the most important and crucial stage in the electoral process for political candidates and political

parties; political campaigns are designed to achieve maximum vote bank and every political party tries to get voters' favors by running successful election campaigns, and the results of these campaigns are seen more or less during elections. Many studies emphasize the effectiveness of social media for politicians and political parties as a platform to directly speak and convince their voters and the effectiveness of social media as interactive platforms which lead to offline discussions and enhancing participation in the political and electoral process (Chadwick, 2006). Liaqat et al. (2018) evaluated the impact of 'political candidate's connectedness' with their voters as compared to 'the provision of services' on the voting behavior of individuals and found that political candidate's connectedness is more likely to win more votes as compared to the services provided to voters in past (negating Down's Rational Choice Model). According to some PEW statistics about US presidential elections 2012, social media have been an important part of the election process. Voters have been talking about candidate preferences, ballot selections, encouraging others to vote for a particular political candidate. In 2018 a suevey conducted by Pew Research Center concluded 60% of twitter users as Democrats and 35% as Republican[58] (Pew Research Center, 2019). DiGrazia et al., (2013) suggested that social media activity, such as public discussion, can be used as an indicator for political or electoral behavior. They found a statistical relation between tweets mentioning the name of political candidates and voters' turnout in their favor. Focusing on the US presidential campaign of 2016, Fujiwara et al., (2020) suggest that twitter not only predicted but it affected the election outcomes. However, I assume that mere the number of tweets mentioning the names of political candidates can not a reliable indicator without knowing the context in which a voter tweets and the other content of tweets such as whether it is mentioning the name of the politician positively or negatively. While in another study on the 2016 US presidential election, social media reality and ground reality were different as social media polling results before elections were different from election day polling results. Moreover, many studies also showed that social media have been effective in increasing voting turnout (Bond et al., 2012; DiGrazia et al., 2013). Bond et al. (2012) investigated the effects of social media (facebook) messages on voters' turnout in US midterm elections; however, they also found that social media can be a predictor of voters' turnout.

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[58]Repot can be accessed from https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/10/23/national-politics-on-twitter-small-share-of-u-s-adults-produce-majority-of-tweets/

Nevertheless, friends' motivations to other friends and to participate in elections and to influence voting decisions have been facilitated by social media use during US elections. 30% of the total registered voters have been encouraged by their friends and family on social media to vote (pewinternet.org, 2012). Fogg proposes theoretically, that individual voter's acquaintances may help voters to decide about which candidates are better or whom to vote for. And it is more likely that a particular candidate is also supported by voter's acquaintances. Such an informal exchange of information is more likely to be facilitated by social media users on their virtual spaces (Fogg & Eckles, 2007; Fogg & Iizawa, 2008). Social media studies on political communication clearly demonstrate the efficacy of friends' social network on electoral behavior and pinpoint that being part of one's social network increases the probability of casting a vote (Bond et al., 2017; McClurg, 2003; Nickerson, 2007), and even, the probability of casting a vote correctly when network provide unambiguous signals about the political candidate (Sokhey & McClurg, 2012a). Nevertheless, this fulfils the demands of democratic discourse by making the right decision based upon available information.

Baek (2015) investigated the relationship of social media use and electoral behavior of Korean voters and past non-voters and figured out that voting behavior is influenced by three determinants 1) political and non-political use of social media 2) past voter and non-voter 3) social media messages received or sent to friends. He concluded that previously non-voters who receive political messages from social media friends are more likely to vote (conforming sociological model). These studies clearly demonstrate that the political use of social media coupled with social endorsements enhances the likelihood of voting. Further, Kim & Geidner also endorsed that social media's political use enhances the tendency to vote and to donate for a political campaign (2008). Based on Kim & Geidner's analysis, Utz, (2009) stresses the strength of social media for engaging voters and persuading them for political and electoral participation.

In the case of social media networks, strong ties in close friends' groups are more effective as compared to weak ties to influence voting behavior. The indirect impact can also be seen when the message is tagged with certain friends' names, it reaches friends of friends so they were also influenced (Bond et al., 2012, 2017; J. J. Jones et al., 2017; Sokhey & McClurg, 2012a).

Nonetheless, there exists another dimension of peer factor in the voting decisions. Voting is considered as a non-partisan action, which is required to propagate with non-partisan voting

messages, then it can generate more fruitful results which are also shown through an online study of social networks and voting turnout which states that non-partisan messages of electoral campaigns can influence more to the online friends and even friends of a friend because the friends with opposing political belief when receiving a neutral message posted by their friends, they pay attention and are more influenced by it[59] (Markoff, 2012).

The social surroundings of a person, to which he belongs, have a substantial effect on his electoral behavior, even in overall increasing voting turnout. Political messages emphasizing electoral participation were delivered to 61 million facebook users during the 2010 U.S. Congressional elections. This study was conducted measuring their effect on three variables, political self-expression, information-seeking, and real-world voting behavior. The messages did not only influence receiving users but also the friends of users and friends of friends. The effect of social media communication of the messages on real-world voting was more than the direct effect of the messages. The results show that facebook messages directly affected all political behaviors. (Bond et al., 2012, pp. 295–298). Another study, which was the replication of Bond et al. (2012) conducted in 2012 presidential elections yielded that there is a significant increase in voting trends. Focusing on sociological influences provoked by social media, the study suggests that an increased voting trend was observed among close friends of those who directly received the messages. However, the study emphasized the effects of social influences more than the effects of direct messaging (J. J. Jones et al., 2017). Bond et al. analyzed the effects of social endorsement cues on different electoral behaviors. The results suggest that voting recommendations by others in one's social environment are prominently effective in different political behaviors such as political expression, information seeking, and voting (2017).

6.4 Operationalization of Traditional Voting Behavior

Measuring the change in traditional voting behavior requires an account of respondents' previous voting behavior and voting mindset. As explained in its conceptualization, a typical Pakistani voter is influenced by local power structures, partisanship, and local parochial benefits (Waseem, 1993), all this makes a profile of traditional voting trend in Pakistan. However,

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[59] Article can be accessed from https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/13/us/politics/social-networks-affect-voter-turnout-study-finds.html

according to my hypothesis, the political use of social media has changed the traditional electoral behavior of a Pakistani university student.

Considering all possible traits of traditional voting behavior which were taken from different studies from Pakistan about social and political pressures on voting, respondents were asked to uncover the influences of family, cast/ biradri, and feudal lords on their voting. Moreover, to analyze the *change in traditional voting behavior* the other categories formulated were voting preferences, role of political partisanship in voting, role of family pressures, role of peer group pressures.

The disparity between the likelihood of real-world voting and the level of their interest in politics also corresponds to the age of users. A user may have a higher level of political interest but he was not a registered voter due to age limitations. However, their intention of voting in the next elections may represent/ correspond to their level of interest in politics.

The researcher constructed the questions covering all above mentioned topics which, overall, inquired whether social media have been successful in changing voting trends in the youth of Pakistan.

6.5 Conclusion

Through literature from the election and electoral behavior studies, we infer that sociological, psychosocial, and rational choice models have put bases of electoral behavior studies and are the most used frameworks for the analysis of voters' electoral behavior to date. Many media, communication, and political science scholars further continued their work based on Lazarsfeld et al., (1944), Cammpbell et al., (1960), and Downs (1957) and figured out many sub determinants of electoral behavior of an individual. We have noticed that an individual voter is influenced by short term and long term factors, distal and proximal factors, socio-political and psychological factors, either from inside or outside of an individual voter. However, an individual can experience varying number and type of factors depending upon his immediate environment and socio-political conditions of the country. In the socio-political context of Pakistan, where the literacy rate is very low and the margin of social and political awareness becomes truncated, most of the population is suffering from poverty and living in rural areas, both urban and rural population is suffering from lack of basic facilities and necessities of life, poor law and order situation have created insecurities among general masses, unstable political

setups, passed almost half of its age in the nondemocratic regime, beheld two-party political structure for decades, corruption scandals of national level political parties and authoritative influences over electoral choices of a voter, it is not so difficult to predict or foresee the general electoral behavior of an individual voter because the political and electoral self of an individual is composed of series of aforementioned events. This study is aimed to analyze the sociological determinants which are affecting the voting decisions of Pakistani voter. Through previous literature, many traditional voting influences have been figured out i.e. caste/ biradri pressures, family pressures, peer pressures. This study is designed to test the research question that whether political expression on social media has influenced the traditional voting behaviors of university youth in Pakistan. However, it is greatly dependent on contextual factors that contribute to the overall political and electoral personality of a voter and it is very important to figure out these factors empirically.

6.6 Hypotheses Testing

6.6.1 Hypotheses

H_0: There is no association between social media political expression and the change in traditional voting behavior of university students.

H_1: There is an association between social media political expression and the change in traditional voting behavior of university students.

Regression Table 6.1 Prediction of Change in Tradition Voting Behaviour

Variable	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	T	Durbin-Watson
Constant		.398	25.220	
Social Media Political Expression	.489*	.026	15.316	1.715

a. Dependent Variable: Change in Traditional Voting Bevaviour. The table presents the regression model of social media political expression and Change in Traditional Voting Bevaviour
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.338. Durbin Watson=1.775
Correlation is significant at * $p < .001$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .05$.

The statistical inferences provide evidence that does not support the null hypothesis. Hence, H_1 is supported by statistical analysis. As predicted in hypothesis H_1, social media political expression has a significant and positive association ($\beta = .489$, $p < .001$) with the change in traditional voting behavior. It indicates that if social media political expression among university students is increased by one standard deviation, the change in traditional voting behavior among university students is increased by 0.489 standard deviations. Regression analysis also supported this model as 33.8% of variance (Adjusted R^2) in the change in traditional voting behavior through social media was explained by variables included in the analysis.

These findings led to another regression model, comprising more than one explanatory variable, to look into the effects of independent variables (control variables) other than the focal independent variable (social media political expression). The researcher's investigation of the previous literature suggested many other indicators such as gender, age, study level, study department, family income level, and province, which may influence one's level of change in traditional voting behavior. To know the effect of other independent variables along with social media political expression, another regression model is analyzed.

Regression Table 6.2 Prediction of Change in Traditional Voting Behaviour with Control Variables

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t
Constant		1.516	1.944
Social Media Political Expression	.481*	.026	14.703
Student Age	.059**	.052	2.757
Gender of the Student	.049**	.198	2.346
Study Level of the student	-.025	.090	-1.173
Study Department of student	.027***	.056	2.316
Family Income	.014	.000	.684
Province of the student	-.027	.082	-1.328

a. Dependent Variable: Change in Traditional Voting Behaviour.

Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.332. Durbin Watson=1.728
Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05.

Table 6.2 shows the standardized regression coefficients along with standard error and value of t-test of all explanatory variables. Regression analysis also supported this model when including other explanatory variables (demographic characteristics of the students). Some of these control variables yielded a low but significant influence on the change in traditional voting behavior of university students in Pakistan. Such as the association of age of the students with the change in traditional voting behavior (β = .059, p < .01) was statistically significant. It indicates that if the age is increased by one standard deviation, the change in traditional voting behavior among university students is increased by 0.059 standard deviations and this is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables (social media political expression, study level, gender, study department, province, and family income level) are kept constant.

Similarly, the association of the gender with the change in the traditional voting behavior of the university students (β = .049, p < .01) and the association of the study department with the change in traditional voting behavior of the university students (β = .027, p < .05) were statistically significant. This is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables, excluding the one which was measured, are kept constant.

The statistical inferences pointed out that the focal independent variable (social media political expression) still remained highly significant and associated (β = .481, p < .001) with the change in traditional voting behavior of the university students (dependent variable) when the effects of other control variables were also measured. The variables included in this model accounted for 33.2% of total variance in the change in traditional voting behavior. Age, gender, and study department of the student were proved the only statistically significant control variables in this model. The other control variables in the demographic block such as study level, province, and income level were statistically insignificant and not associated with the change in traditional voting behavior.

Table 6.3 presents the regression analysis of demographic variables with their individual response categories. First part of this table represents the standardized regression coefficients of the change in traditional voting behaviour of male (β = .503, p < .001) and female (β = .444, p < .01). It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the change in traditional voting behavior is increased by 0.503 standard deviations

among male university students and .444 among female university students. The value of Durbin-Watson was very well within the range (1.5 - 2.5). The statistics presented in Table 6.3 showed that male respondents exhibited a higher level of change in traditional voting behavior as a result of their social media political expression than female respondents.

Regression Table 6.3 Prediction of Political Awareness Comparing Gender, Study Discipline, and Province

Variable	Response Categories	Adjusted R^2	Standardized Coefficients[a][b] (β)	Std. Error	t	Durbin-Watson
1-Gender	Male	.324*	.503*	.035	11.925	1.572
	Female	.289*	.444**	.039	8.950	1.888
2-Study Discipline	Social Science	.275*	.484*	.030	12.414	1.567
	Physical Science	.325*	.418*	.033	10.497	1.846
3-Province	Punjab	.375	.481*	.038	11.375	2.013
	Sindh	.312	.369*	.064	5.386	1.641
	Khyber Pakhtunkha	.319	.373*	.054	4.654	1.695
	Balochistan	.248	.304*	.062	4.073	1.582

a. Dependent Variable: Change in Traditional Voting Behaviour.
b. Predictor: Social Media Political Expression, Gender, Study Discipline, Province
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05

Second part of Table 6.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of the change in traditional voting behavior of the students from different disciplines. For more accurate and confined analysis of the study department, all study departments were further categorized into two main study disciplines (social science and physical science). This new variable was named as study discipline. The standardized regression coefficients of the change in traditional voting behaviour of social science students (β = .484, p < .001) and for physical science students (β = .418, p < .001) was noted. It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the change in traditional voting behavior is increased by 0.484 standard deviations among social science students and .418 among physical science students. The value of

Durbin-Watson was very well within the range (1.5 - 2.5). It can be inferred that social science students exhibited a higher level of change in traditional voting behavior as a result of their social media political expression than physical science students.

Third part of Table 6.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of the change in traditional voting behavior of the students from different provinces i. e for the students from the province of Punjab (β = .481, p < .001), the students from the province of Sindh (β = .369, p < .001), the students from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha (β = .373, p < .001) and for the students from the province of Balochistan (β = .304, p < .001) was noted. It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of the change in traditional voting behavior is increased by 0.481 standard deviations among the students of the province of Punjab, 0.369 among students of the province of Sindh, 0.373 in the students of the province of Khyber Pakhtynkha and 0.304 in the students of the province of Balochistan.

Statistical analysis showed that the students from the province of Punjab exhibit a higher level of change in traditional voting behavior than the students of other provinces. Similarly, the analysis revealed that the students from the province of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkha have almost the same level of the change in traditional voting behavior as a result of their social media political expression. The values of Adjusted R^2 give the overall explanation of the model with respect to each category of the variables and the results can be well generalized on the population.

6.6.2 Discussion

In this chapter, I examined the relationship between university students' political use of social media and the change in their traditional voting behavior. The formulated hypothesis was "Political expression on social media is associated with the change in traditional voting behavior of university students in Pakistan". Further, a detailed analysis aimed at measuring the role of intervening variables, such as gender, age, study level, study discipline, family income, and province. However, the association between social media political expression and the change in traditional voting behavior of university students was evaluated by using inferential statistics.

Investigation of previous literature revealed that the focus of most of the election studies has been particularly on analyzing an individual voter's voting behaviors (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944,

1968; Lazarsfeld et al., 1954; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). Moreover, the emphasis has been implied on the factors or the intentions and motivations behind voting, effects of group affiliations and personal contacts on voting, political party affiliation, and individual's mental constructs (Visser, 1996). Research literature from Pakistan and the international perspective suggest that the voting behavior of an individual voter is influenced by sociological, psychological, and 'self-interest and rational choice' factors. However, this chapter attempts to investigate and disentangle all these concepts which have been conceptualized and operationalized in the context of sociological model. I explored the construct of traditional voting behavior and its related concepts in the context of Pakistan such as family pressures on the voting decision, caste/ biradri affiliations, peer factors, and the effects of political partisanship.

The results from hypothesis testing revealed that there is a positive association between social media political expression and the change in traditional voting behavior among university students in Pakistan. The overall model suggests medium level correlation among social media political expression and the change in traditional voting behavior as a cumulative index of family pressures on the voting decision, caste/ biradri affiliations, peer factors, and the effects of political partisanship. The second model of social media political expression including other explanatory variables also has high significance explaining (33.2 %) of variance, and has relatively the same correlation with the change in traditional voting behavior.

In all models of the change in traditional voting behavior whether social media political expression is used as the only predictor or along with other demographic variables, the political use of social media (political expression) has a significant relationship with the change in traditional voting behavior. Analyzing gender-wise split model of the change in traditional voting behavior, the study revealed significant and meaningful differences in the change in traditional voting behavior among male and female students as a result of social media political expression i.e male students exhibited more change in traditional voting behavior as compared to female university respondents. Though there has been found a positive association in the change in traditional voting behavior of both male and female for political use of social media, but the change in traditional voting behavior in female students is relatively less because of the global phenomenon of gender gap i.e. less political orientation of women as compared to men (Fraile &

Sánchez-vítores, 2020) and gender-defined social and political differentiation (Akhlaq Ahmad et al., 2019; Shakil Ahmed et al., 2020).

Further, the model also revealed that the prediction of the change in traditional voting behavior of social science students as an outcome of social media political expression was not much different from that of physical science students. Results indicated minor differences in the level of the change in traditional voting behavior.

Province wise split model predicts higher differences in the level of the change in traditional voting behavior among the students of different provinces. The students from the province of Punjab tend to have a higher change in traditional voting behavior as a result of their social media political expression. The students from the provinces of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkha exhibited almost the same change in traditional voting behavior. The students from the province of Balochistan exhibited the lowest level of change in traditional voting behavior as a result of their social media political expression.

However, the differences in the level of change in traditional voting behavior are well justified in the light of previous literature as Samad (2014) and Aman & Akram (2018) stated that strongly integrated tribal traditions coupled with local politics in Balochistan are preventing the people of Balochistan (non-urban population to a large extent and urban population to some extent) to be the part of the national political process.

Political partisanship was analyzed by asking the respondents about their extent of political affiliation with any political party and secondly by questioning their political affiliation with a specific political parties (by mentioning the name). The Psychological model of voting behavior also emphasizes to study an individual as a primary voting unit for the analysis of electoral behavior but in context to political partisanship. Study revealed that 63% of respondents had strong political affiliation, whereas 22% had no affiliation with any political party. These findings fairly well correspond to the cumulative percentage of respondents who are affiliated to different political parties, mentioned in the study (Pakistan Muslim League-N, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf, Pakistan Peoples Party, and others). However, its conceptual aspects were considered as operational i.e. partisanship is a psychological association of an individual with a political party which does not guarantee a firm relation with the political party such as membership or registration of casting vote for it (Antunes, 2010)

Recent scholarship has argued that the political use of social media has a positive and direct relationship with tshe change in traditional voting behavior. Blais et al., based upon strong methodological grounds in his study, presented another scholarship. He states that half of the voters cast their votes without doing cost and benefit calculation considering it a duty. While those who even do not consider it a duty, do not pay attention to the cost and benefits of voting; hence rational choice model weakens (2000, pp. 181–201). Since the emergence of social media, many changes in communicative patterns and their effects on an individual's deliberation have been witnessed with every passing year. Present study revealed that 68.5% of respondents cast their votes thinking their vote can bring a good change in the country while 6.5% either do not think so or they cast their vote without having any particular thought in mind. However, I believe that somehow there exist sociological and psychological factors that influence one's voting decision but we should not entirely ignore that these findings may be an outcome of rational choices and deliberate thinking by individual voters.

An individual's intention to participate in the democratic political process is assumed to be an important indicator in predicting one's level of engagement in political activities. Keeping in mind this assumption, the questions about students' voting in previous elections which were held in 2018, and their intentions for voting in the next elections were asked. The results indicated that among 750 respondents, only 338 students registered for voting in the previous election, which, ideally, should have been 412 students (excluding the students who were of the age 18 and 19 at the time of the survey, might not be eligible for registering their vote in 2018.). Among 338 registered voters, only 261 cast their votes in national elections 2018. Further, 78% (585) of students showed an inclination to cast their votes in the next national election. It implies that the students' willingness to participate in the democratic process has increased. These findings are very encouraging because there have always been a large majority of people who did not like to vote due to their mistrust on political parties (S. Yousaf, 2016). The current wave of the political use of social media has motivated them to vote. Though there are chances that some percentage of students, who intend to vote for the next national election, might not vote due to several reasons but the prospects are still high because of the higher percentage of students who have intentions to vote in the next election.

Based upon the argument that an individual's voting decision is shaped by what one's social circle considers appropriate (Bond et al., 2012; Gerber et al., 2008; Nickerson, 2007;

Sinclair et al., 2013), this study was intended to evaluate three sociological determinants 'family, friends and caste/ biradri influencing the voting decision. Additionally, in evaluating the sociological factors which influence the voting trends in Pakistani perspective, 'family influence' was proved an important social pressure on voting decisions among other sociological determinants. Family influence on voting decisions was one of the indicators which contributed in the evaluation of the change in traditional voting behaviors in this chapter. Students were asked if they cast their votes following the directions of their family members. Further, they were also asked if they had an argument with their family members to vote for a certain political party. Results suggested that 49% of students did not intend to cast their vote on the directions of family, whereas, 34% still believed they would cast vote following the direction of their family. Although, 34% of students, who abide by this social norm, are still challenging because they affect the virtue of democratic voting, but we should keep in mind that out of the traditional norms, 49% of students are breaking the traditional norms by voting independently without family directions which makes a big difference. Very minimal effect of other sociological determinant 'caste/ biradri' was observed on university students. Though, there has not been found a strong association among the variables, yet, I still believe that this is a very strong finding to shatter the impact of social pressures on voting decisions in Pakistan and promoting the patterns of self-decision making.

Chapter 7. Political Expression on Social Media and Political Participation

7.1 Introduction

Can the political expression on social media facilitate the online political participation of university students? Political discourse on social media has been under discussion by many researchers with special focus on high standards of freedom in the communication process, agenda-setting, political campaigning (Teresi, 2012), participation in the political process (Storck, 2011), voting decision (Gidengil et al., 2016) and as a source of permanent political campaigning (Lilleker & Jackson, 2011). Many scholars all over the world recently worked on analyzing the relationship between political participation and other factors such as social media as a social capital, the political use of social media, offline political behaviors, and political biases on social media (T. Ahmad et al., 2019; Ohme, 2019).

Many other scholars have also tried to link the changing media environment i.e. diversity and the increased utility of communication media such as digital, social, and mobile media (Vowe & Henn, 2016) and the decline in the hegemonic influence of traditional news media (Mitchell et al., 2016) with changes in political communication environment (mentioned in Van Aelst et al., 2017; Blumler, 2016). However, I suggest that the reconstruction of such public spheres and the inclusion of democratic political discourse of marginalized social groups are necessary for positive political participation and smooth running of the democratic process. The barriers in public narrative result in barriers in the prevalence and growth of democracy in society (I M Young, 2002).

My explanation of the phenomenon has a theoretical foundation on the 'Theory of democracy' taken from the book 'Democracy and its critics' by Dahl (1989), and Habermas' 'Theory of Public Sphere'. Emphasizing democracy as the rule by the people, Dahl specifies the requirements of the democratic process; effective participation, voting equality, and enlightened understanding. In this chapter, I will focus on a very important requirement of Dahl's theory of democracy; effective participation. He asserts that the citizens are an integral part of the decision-making process in democracy and they should have provided the equal opportunity to take part in the democratic process via the above mentioned requirements of the democracy.

For a democratic process, the effective participation of all citizens in the decision-making process is inevitable. And non-provision of equal participation means rejecting the principle of equality. He emphasizes that adequate opportunity and equal opportunity should be provided to the citizens for the expression of their choices and even the right to question a particular agenda.

Nevertheless, the question about the healthy contribution of the new public sphere; the social media, in engaging public in political discourse via discussion on public debate fora and their participation in the political process has not been attended sufficiently in context to the socio-political environment of Pakistan. I have already given the scholarly explanation of political discourse on independent online public platforms in the form of political discussion, talks, and debate in chapter 2 and their contribution in enhancing political knowledge and efficacy among the members of these online public fora in chapter 5. However, in this chapter, I am focusing on the question as to how social media political discourse encourages the participation of individuals in online political activities so as to affect the democratic political process of the country.

7.2 Democratic Discourse leads to Political Participation

In previous years, global political communication research has dealt with a specific focus on the relationship between communication media and the power sources which ultimately results in the exclusion of people from policy and decision-making processes. The exclusion of people from policy and decision-making process is a non-democratic norm which usually prevails not only in non-democratic but even in most of the democracies in the world also (Iris Marion Young, 2002). The exclusion of people, especially the youth, from politics can endanger the legitimacy of democracy in democratic political setup (Pickard & Bessant, 2018). There has been a lot of research focus on media ownership, news commercialization, profit orientation of news organizations, government, and economic elites, which affect the communication process and exclude the majority of the people from important political discourse. The major focus of researches on the subjects have been on the factors affecting the communication process and attaining effective communication (Allwood, 1978), and how new information technologies can benefit disadvantageous groups of the society (McChesney, Robert W. and Schiller, 2003). However, this concern has moved to the consequences of power sources on the democratization of communication process in recent times (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012) and then further, to the

importance of inclusion of the public discourse for establishing democratic values and their relationship with the provision of new media communication technologies (Bode et al., 2014; Castells, 2010).

Irrespective of the medium of political communication, the democratization of political discourse is emphasized by many political communication scholars for the resilience and sustainability of the democratic process previously and also in recent times (Burch, 2014; C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012; León & Burch, 2007; Sánchez Medero, 2020; Van Aelst et al., 2017; Iris Marion Young, 2002). The democratization of the communication process stresses the inclusion of all individuals and segments of the society which were marginalized due to biased political discourse in reference to freedom of expression. For a long, the majority of the people have been marginalized from political, social, and policy formulation process throughout the world (Bernt & Colini, 2013). In a broader social and political context, as evident through a historical analysis of political setups of many countries, the marginalization of the majority of the people from democratic political discourse may lead to anxiety among citizens, anger, hate, violence, demonstrations, and protests (Breuer et al., 2012).

Notwithstanding, the participation of a large number of people in political discourse is good for healthier political democratic norms. Public narrative through open talks, discussion, and thought sharing on public platforms and fora of independent debate enables plurality in political communicative discourse. Multiple views on social media strike on the individuals' mind and force them to think rationally and create political consciousness; further, Political consciousness constitutes knowledge about political institutions, political processes, its dynamics, and processes and is a key concept for understanding the political system. Moreover, equality in the access to an independent discussion for political communication motivates independent decision-making in the political and democratic process which again results in increasing political consciousness among masses (Hedstrom & Smith, 2013). Political consciousness has long-lasting, across the board and influential potential for successful democratic and political functioning; well-informed citizens participate more profoundly in the national political and decision-making process. Wei & Zhao (2017) found strong correlations between political orientation and participation and the political efficiency of the people in China.

In the previous context, a shift in research focus has been observed with the decreasing popularity of predominance of mainstream media among the public throughout the world (C. F.

Fletcher et al., 2012). The researchers call for a new research horizon as an alternative approach for seeking news, information, entertainment, and this approach has led to the non-commercial and non-profitable journalism.

Critiques of mainstream media regarded it as a barrier to democratic discourse since limiting the scope of free speech. Their conclusion was based on the analysis of media corporations' ownership in democratic countries and the analysis of media content arguing that mainstream media lack the diversity of opinion (McChesney, 2016; León & Burch, 2007).

The emergence and the popularity of the internet provide an opportunity for spreading public discourse on public broadcasting channels because of its characteristic of being more suitable as a well-functioning public sphere. Researchers have been giving more attention to this alternative media, as a potential substitute to mainstream media, which bears more diversity in structure and public discourse without the hegemonic influence of powerful elites (Jaques et al., 2019; Jeppesen, 2016). Inequalities to access the communication resources may lead to a situation where individuals face barriers in communicating such political discourse which can contribute to influencing policy decisions (Fletcher et al., 2012; Young, 2002). That is why this speedy emergence of new information and communication technologies is reframing the scholarly debate not only about the inclusion of the majority of the people in the political process but also about the democratization of the communication process through the new public sphere of social media (Burch, 2014).

7.3 Relationship between Online Political Expression and Online Political Participation: Conceptualization and Literature Review

In chapter 2, I have clearly established the notion of social media as a public sphere for public discourse, where, according to Drache (2008), *politics is done by citizens, not for citizens,* enabling to provide more opportunities to express the discourse of their own choice (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012). Internet and social media, *a new public sphere,* is not only facilitating but, somehow, replacing the traditional forms of political participation and transforming into more innovative forms and activities of political participation (Getachew & Beshah, 2019; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). Political and communication scholars have conceptualized and analyzed political participation within the premises of citizens' voluntary participation in activities such as voting, campaign activities, correspondence with officials, collecting money for a candidate or for a

political cause (Uhlaner, 2015; Verba & Nie, 1972, mentioned in Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Uhlaner, 2001) and other unconventional forms of political participation through collective activities such as petitioning, striking, protesting, demonstrating and boycotting (Conge, 2016). This conceptualization of political participation may vary depending upon one's immediate research interests. The upsurge in social media use has reshaped the patterns of political participation for young people worldwide (Keating & Melis, 2017; Villanti et al., 2017). Nonetheless, studies on the subject, more or less, are focusing on the same parameters of political participation but many studies are failed to establish a link between political expression and political participation (direct, indirect, or causal). However, I hypothesize that political participation has a direct positive association with political expression. To analyze the hypothesis about online political engagement of youngsters, I will establish a theoretical framework about whether social media use, via political talk and political discussion, affect political engagement. Researches in this concern highlighted the significance of political expression to motivate people to political participation ((Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Knoll et al., 2020; Valenzuela et al., 2012).

A PEW survey report 2018 on social media use and civic and political participation among young Americans states that the dominant majority of US adults use social media and the age group 18-24 uses a variety of social media platforms together. Moreover, 66% of social media users have used the platforms to participate in different civic and political activities such as to post their thoughts on a particular issue, press 'like', react to others' postings, involving other friends in these activities, and encourage them to vote and posting links to news stories, following political candidates on twitter, re-tweeting other's tweets and election updates (Anderson et al., 2014; Ohme, 2019; Ohme et al., 2016; Pew Research Center, 2016).

The research on the use of online communication technologies and its relationship to encourage or motivate the public to political participation have been passing through evolutionary phases since 90's and no consensus is found in the scientific literature on its potential impact on citizens' participation (Lilleker et al., 2011; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). Multidimensional findings suggest mixed evidence. Critics argue that it only facilitates barrier-free communication, and smooth flow of communication, further, freedom of sharing information influences citizens' participation (Bode et al., 2014; H. G. de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2005; Wells et al., 2017). According to Pickard & Bessant, (2018), Boulianne, (2015), Dahlgren, (2012), and Chu & Yeo, (2018), there is still disagreement whether it develops

an attitude toward politics and political participation, it increases the level of political participation, or just reinforces already established political behaviors. For instance, Cho et al. (2018) based on an empirical study on US citizens, argue that online political expression reinforces and hardens pre-existing political preferences of the expresser. About maintaining facebook account, Theocharis & Lowe (2016) reported negative conclusions on online and offline political participation. Knoll et al., (2020) developed a Social Media Political Participation Model (SMPPM) to assess the level of political participation. They propose that, whether the exposure is incidental or intentional, the social media use lead to political participation after passing through a series of processes i.e. exposure to political information, processing of information, developing political interest, etc.

Now I will move this discussion forming its empirical foundation explaining the relationship between political expression communicated through social media and online political engagement and participation. I found a lot of literature from American election studies and European elections studies, but side by side, I tried to analyze this relationship in context to Pakistani political and election studies, but, unfortunately, fewer studies with good methodological background have focused on this phenomenon. However, mixed pieces of evidence are found through the literature of past studies from international and Pakistani political setup. Some argued that the use of social media has a significant and potentially strong positive relation with political engagement and participation (Boulianne, 2009, 2015; Dimitrova et al., 2014; Eijaz, 2013), whereas, there is a body of research that concludes weak ties among both (Mihailidis, 2014) or suggests its potential effects under certain conditions (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). For example, Mihailidis, (2014), while comparing traditional mechanisms and new space for political participation, conducted a survey of 800 college students and showed that rising use of social media has been observed for political expression while the level of participation was reported as limited.

Scientific literature suggests that an individual's political expressions may lead to motivate individuals for collective action (Ahuja et al., 2018; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). Additionally, these individual political expressions help in positively forming collective behaviors, and in recent times many researchers have also found a positive relationship between collective political behaviors and political actions (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Velasquez & Rojas, 2017). Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014) discussing the theoretical grounds, establish a

relationship between political talk and political action by changing a person, who is expressing or sharing thoughts, from a mere observer to a participant. In the same manner, many empirical researchers like Bakshy et al., (2015) also suggest that machine mediated political communication is more diverse than face-to face communication which opens up new and diverse avenues for both engaged and disengaged audience (quoted in Velasquez & Rojas, 2017, pp. 1–13). Social media communication is an example of machine mediated communication which provides an opportunity for healthy political expression and which consequently leads to political actions.

Previous studies like Bode et al. (2014) and Hsieh & Li (2014) demonstrate that online civic talk and online political expression is a positive predictor of online and offline political participation. Nevertheless, whether from information exposure, increased trust, or a combination of these factors, SNSs, in general (C. S. Park, 2017; Teresi, 2012) and twitter, in particular (Boukes, 2019; C. S. Park, 2013) have the potential to be an effective tool for political communication that can increase political knowledge, change political attitudes, and activate civic behavior in citizens.

The use of online news gathering seems to be more effective in influencing political expression on social media and promoting civic engagement (Boulianne, 2009). News media also seems to be paying close attention to the blogs and have opened journalistic blogs to catch the attention of young audiences. Side by side, mainstream media's websites also have such interactive features where users can post their comments in response to news reports in routine. However, Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014) discovered that social media news use via political expression has an indirect effect on online and offline political participation. Whereas, Dimitrova et al., (2014), analyzing two-panel surveys, found a weak connection between digital media use and its effects on political learning, but found a comparatively substantial effect on political participation. Zhu et al. (2019) analyzed creative social media use i.e. music, music videos, visuals, personal blog, through three-wave panel data and found a positive association with political participation via the mediating effect of enhanced online political expression. However, the study did not reveal the moderating role of online political expression between social media use and political participation.

A shift in the communication of political discourse from traditional media professional platforms to social media public platforms has opened new avenues of research debate in

previous years. Mobilizing effects of social media political discourse on social media users have been the interest of researchers in two different contexts. The first context is concerned with the users of social media who have been active politically prior to the exposure of political content on social media and the other context is about those users who have been non-active politically prior to the exposure of political content on social networking sites. Expected and possible consequences of using political content on social media on both kinds of social media users may be titled as reinforcement, super activism and no effect at all or it may provide diverse pieces of evidence depending upon the social and political characteristics of the individual user of social media (Knoll et al., 2020; C. Vaccari et al., 2015).

7.4 Online Political Participation of Youth

As fairly aforementioned, new media provides new opportunities for the new forms of political activism and engagement in both democratic and authoritarian regimes. Diverse communication opportunities through the internet and social networking sites have made political and social activists more active than ever before (Drache, 2008, mentioned in C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012). Youngsters' more extensive and frequent use of the social media has turned researchers' interest to political expression on social media by youngsters and the impacts of their use on their online and offline political participation. The phenomenon of youth's political participation affected by social media use is analyzed by H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart (2016) among college students during the US Election 2012. They investigated the psychological and behavioral factors, involved in the use of social networking sites, which predict youngster's online political participation, and further they found a positive relationship between online social capital, political self-efficacy, Facebook group participation, and online political participation. While investigating the influence o social trust they found that it did not directly influence online political participation (H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016). Youngsters' heavy routine exposure to Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube has strengthened researchers' belief, all over the world, in expected outcomes of youth's political use of social media and their online and offline political engagement.

Among studies on social media use and political activism of youth in Pakistan, many scholars reinforce the increasing use of social media and heavy dependency on social media for political purposes. This growing occurrence stirred the focus of Pakistani researchers to its

potential impacts on the online and offline political activism of Pakistani youth in the perspective of youth's social media use (M. Y. Khan et al., 2019; Ahmad et al., 2019; Eijaz, 2013; Karamat & Farooq, 2016; Masiha et al., 2018; Zaheer, 2016). However, all studies conclude positive relationship between the youth's social media use and their online and offline political engagement. During election 2013 and onward, the social media has changed the political scenario of Pakistan; the reliance of political parties and political candidates on social media for mobilizing youth and youth's activism on online and offline politics of Pakistan which has not been experienced previously in Pakistani politics (Karamat & Farooq, 2016). This new political outlook influenced and structured by social media, not only transformed the traditional forms of political activities into diverse and contemporary forms of political participation among youngsters, but it also encouraged youngsters to participate in the traditional forms of political activities i.e voting (Quintelier, 2007). Inspired by both, the global political communication scenario and the aforementioned social media political communication environment in Pakistan's political setup, I hereby, hypothesize that he political expression on social media among youngsters in Pakistan enhances their online and offline political participation.

7.4.1 Online Political Participation in Previously Disengaged Youth

As described by Westling, social media were not only used as a forum of political debate among users of these sites but also to communicate political stuff to the younger generation, especially those who were not active on these websites. Social media proved as a catalyst also for a politically disengaged group of people e.g. a group particularly not interested in politics previously (2007, p-2; C. Vaccari et al., 2015). Rather than focusing on social media as a communicative media for all citizens, Gidengil et al. assert that social media are becoming more popular among those members who are not much involved in political frames on mainstream media (Gidengil et al., 2007). However, based upon Gidengil et al. (2007) and Fletcher et al. (2012)' s analysis, I suggest that the comparative analysis of the communication patterns of both, the mainstream media and the social media is necessary to understand what makes people to use and to switch any specific media for communication.

Proceeding with the assumption, that the decreasing political participation among youth is due to the exclusion of youth from mainstream hierarchical political participation, Mustapha & Omar analyzed online and offline participatory behaviors as a result of social media generic and

political use among youth. The results reveal a positive and significant association with online political participation, however, in the case of offline political participation, though insignificant but the association was positive. They conclude that youth's mainstream political disengagement takes over safe heaven in alternative and online political engagement which is non-hierarchical and cost-effective (2020).

7.5   Measurement of Social Media Use for Political Participation from Previous Literature

Through a large body of literature on the subject, the use of social media and consequently its impacts on youngsters' lives, irrespective of individual user's own characteristics, are judged using three parameters in different researches (i) type and the particular use of social media (ii) the intensity of social media use (iii) the density of social media use (Skoric et al., 2016; Wirtz et al., 2017). Nonetheless, the broader outlook of the internet and social media demands that the effects of social media use on online and offline political participation should be analyzed considering all these parameters by political communication and media scholars in detail. Researches consistently suggest that the people who use social media more have a greater probability or tendency of being engaged in the political process or activity[60] (Wihbey, 2015).

(i)Type and Particular Use of Social Media

Since the emergence of web 1.0 and web 2.0 technologies, many previous and current studies emphasized the particular significance of the type of social media used in achieving particular social and political outcomes. Every social media is characterized by its own purposeful foundation and subsequently, it is differently used. Studies on different types of social media have found varied results; for example, some scholars found the relationship between political expression and participation using twitter (Saifuddin Ahmed & Skoric, 2014; C. Vaccari et al., 2015), using Facebook (Feezell, 2018), both on Facebook and Twitter (Effing et al., 2011; Karamat & Farooq, 2016; Velasquez & Rojas, 2017; H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016) and others using Flicker, Youtube, Musical.ly (Effing et al., 2011; Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2019; Stieglitz et al., 2012).

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[60] An internet article based on the studies of (Bond et al., 2012; Boulianne, 2015), can be accessed from https://journalistsresource.org/studies/politics/digital-democracy/social-media-influence-politics-participation-engagement-meta-analysis/

Many authors have argued that the relationship between social media use and political participation varies depending not only on different types of social media platforms but on their patterns of use (Pasek et al., 2009; Skoric & Zhu, 2016; H. G. I. L. D. E. Zúñiga et al., 2013). Studying on facebook and twitter, H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart (2016) found general use of both facebook and twitter as a positive predictor of political participation. Similarly, the particular uses of social media are also noteworthy to measure social media effects on political participation. Many previous scholars have focused on the entertainment uses of social media, which leads to participation via accidental exposure to social media political content (R. Fletcher & Nielsen, 2017). Based on two-wave panel data, differences between incidental and intentional exposure to political information were identified. Further, without distinguishing political participation in online and offline political activities, the effects of incidental and intentional exposure were tested on political participation. The entertainment motivations of social media use lead to incidental exposure to political information, but, the incidental exposure to political information does not affect one's political participation. However, intentional exposure to political information on social media leads to low-effort political participation (Nanz et al., 2020). In another study, Heiss et al., (2019) found that social media use for political information and for self-expression are associated with political engagement through intentional exposure, whereas, through incidental exposure, the entertainment use of social media was related to online political engagement. Some have found that the news seeking uses of social media enhances their interest in politics, which directly and indirectly leads to political participation (Valeriani & Vaccari, 2016). Some have given attention to how common forms of online activity encourage online and offline political activity (Kahne & Bowyer, 2018).

(ii) Intensity of Social Media Use

Generally, social media use is defined as the time spent on social media in terms of average hours spent and average posts made on Facebook or frequency of tweets or retweets on Twitter per week (Wirtz et al., 2017). Many studies investigate the relationship between social media usage intensity and political participation where the intensity is measured by users' activity on social media sites. Frequency and intensity of social media use have become important investigation measures of political participation for many of the previous and recent scholars. Hence, this is regarded as the direct and simple measure of political participation. Investigating the differences in intensity of social media's political use on social media users of

US, less to moderate political use of facebook and twitter was a positive predictor of online political participation; however, a negative relationship was found between extensive Facebook and Twitter use and political participation (H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016).

The effects of the 'intensity of Social media use' are measured on personal involvement, physical involvement, and situational involvement and found the increased involvement level with the increasing use of SNS (C.-H. Park & Kim, 2013). Figuring out the effects of social media use on political opinions of Taiwanese, the political expression on Facebook is operationalized as the discussion on any political topic on Facebook, and the intensity of political expression on Twitter involves the frequency of tweeting or retweeting about any political topic and the number of political characters followed (Hsieh & Li, 2014).

(iii) Density of Social Media Use

Besides the fact, that 'how much' the particular social media is used, affect political participation, a complex process of, 'how' a particular social media is used, should also be the concern for measuring political participation (Shah et al., 2005).

The density of social media use means how deeply people are engaged in using social media sites. Density usually indicates the interest level of the users of social media. In context to political communication and political participation, the interest level both in social media and in politics (encouraged by social media or not) defines the density of social media use for political communication. The density of social media use is characterized by heterogeneous practices of users fluctuating from passive consumption to active political expression and discussion, entangling online political controversy and engaging in online social conversations (Skoric & Zhu, 2016).

Technologically, social media websites provide many purposes for their use. For example, the use of Facebook as social networking site; some people use it to have daily updates by their friends and the family on different issues, some use it to pass on active comments on these updates, some use it to upload videos of their own and of their favorite personalities, some post news links about hot issues, some just feel it a routine activity by pressing 'like' on daily posts by their network friends, and others have logical processing of their 'newsfeed', some people 'comment' some 'react' and some share. However, some people like to repost their daily newsfeed.

Similarly, twitter is also treated differently by different users as a social media site. In general, specific uses of social media by its users explain the density of its users.

7.6 Political Participation in Social Media Political Campaigns

As it has been discussed earlier that social networking sites and microblogging services are used as a prominent source of election campaigning by political parties, candidates, and their supporters; many scholars argued the role of social media during election campaigns and confirmed its effectiveness. Nevertheless, the political parties and the candidates are using social media to initiate their political agenda in routine also. It is a matter of common observation that for political parties and candidates, not only during elections, social media is a tool for permanent campaigning throughout the tenure between two elections through the propagation of political agenda and policies and to keep engaging their supporters. Opposition political parties use social media as a permanent source of campaigning, sometimes, by initiating movements and strikes to keep check and balance on the government policies or the government's wrong initiatives. Nevertheless, this particular phenomenon remained under discussion by scholars because most of the studies on the topic of political communication and political campaigns are conducted on or during elections.

Political expression on social media facilitated and encouraged social media users for a number of political activities, for example, for political campaigning during elections, and candidates' publicity, promoting specific political agenda, organizing corner meetings, election fundraising, signing up as a volunteer, building favorable opinion about political candidates, discussion about political candidates, political parties, the election process, corruption, election rigging, the performance of ruling governments, etc. Social media has drastically contributed to a new and different dimension in the political process, to communicate political expression by politicians, political activists, and political supporters (Murse[61], 2019), and even to empower their supporters by using certain social media tools (Zhang et al., 2010, 2013).

"Our thousand-member social media team is busy day and night creating public opinion in favor of PML-N," says Atif Rauf, head of Pakistan Muslim League-N's social media team (themedieline.org, 2018).

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[61] Tom Murse is a former political reporter and current Managing Editor of daily paper "LNP," and weekly political paper "The Caucus," both published by LNP Media in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
Ref: https://www.thoughtco.com/how-social-media-has-changed-politics-3367534

"Using Facebook for political campaigns has become the norm globally and we are just benefiting from it." Says Qasim Khan Tangwani, chief strategist of the political campaign of Sardar Sajan Khan Tangwani, Pakistan's prominent politician (themedieline.org, 2018).

Political parties and candidates, in Pakistan and in many other countries of the world, make substantial use of social media during election campaigns in a number of ways.

(1)   Last decade witnessed a dramatic change in the ways, the election campaigns are run by political parties and candidates. In many countries of the world, politicians made aggressive use of social media platforms to convince their voters. In the previous two elections held in Pakistan, in 2013 and 2018, almost all prominent politicians and leaders of political parties were busy campaigning through social media along with other traditional methods of campaigning like face-to-face and use of traditional media. A big convenience of using online media is that whatever they are doing and wherever they are, they are online and communicating. New communication technologies have been successful in transforming the ways political expression is communicated to encourage the participation and the election campaigns are structured (Lilleker et al., 2011).

(2)   Internet-mediated communication opens up new forums for political campaigners to reach and connect to their voters. The connection of political representatives with citizens is vital to supplement lacking public support as a democratic requirement (Coleman & Blumer, 2010). Election campaigns are designed to win maximum votes and voters' affiliations are determined by their earlier predispositions. The access and connection of political parties and political candidates to voters play a very important role in two ways, (1) in strengthening early predispositions in case of the favorite political party or political candidate, and (2) helping in mind-setting of undecided or floating voters by convincing them effectively through direct contact of political candidates (V. C. Vaccari, 2010). Answer of the question, that whether internet communication encourages the support of decided voters or help undecided voters to reach some decision, through scientific inquiry, provides varied evidence. For example, Jagoda (2005) argues that Web communication was more effective at motivating existing voters than to attract the affiliations of new voters. Endorcing the argument of Jagodha, Jackson & Lilleker (2009) and Lilleker & Jackson (2011) suggest that for political parties, internet communication does not help to persuade undecided voters, but it helps to access existing voters. In turn,

Politicians are also more accessible and accountable in front of their voters (Murse, 2019). *Through two-way communication, the politicians as well as the political parties get honest and real-time feedback,"* says Omar Khan, a social media strategist in Pakistan (themedieline.org, 2018).

(3)   An altogether different dimension of internet communication also cannot be ignored; it is concluded that the internet can encourage more negative campaigning because of its ultimate freedom of expression, which becomes uncontrolled in certain circumstances (Lilleker & Jackson, 2011, p. 25). Trent et al., (2011) and Trent & Friedenberg (1995) identify three negative campaigning strategies: attacking opponents, taking the offensive on issues, and calling for changes, but positive campaigning strategies stress self-promotion, past achievements, and accomplishments of political parties and candidates. However, early empirical work by Carlson & Djupsund (2001) suggests that parties and candidates promote positive messages. Nevertheless, Gibson & Ward (2002) argue that on social media platforms, the opponents' attack messages and the concerns of voters can be quickly defended and answered.

(4)   Based on scientific literature, about research on social media as a tool for fundraising during elections and protest movements, and as a matter of observation, I argue that politicians, political activists, and supporters have now restructured fundraising appeals by knocking the social networks of their followers beyond offline platforms. Political campaign strategy of facebook for US senate election 2010 was tested and found Fundraising as one of the prominent features of U.S Senate election campaigns (Auter & Fine, 2018). Although, fundraising for political campaigns is not observed as a significant feature of social media political discourse in Pakistan, but in many other countries, social media's significant use has been made in fundraising by political parties for their political campaigns.

(5)   Social media provides another source through which political parties and their candidates provide information on their policies and political activities to their supporters and voters. The ability of social media, to broadcast a message to distinct but interest-centered millions of people at the same time facilitates political candidates and the political parties to organize political gatherings and reduces the efforts of political workers and supporters. Moreover, the political parties use social media platforms to

incorporate regular updating of news and information such as updates about political national and local gatherings and the organization of those gatherings. The presence of German political parties on social media platforms, *Facebook, Twitter, Flicker, and Youtube,* was analyzed and revealed that political actors made successful use of these platforms to disseminate campaign information to voters, to contact and issue discussion with them (Stieglitz et al., 2012). Significant features of first-ever twitter campaigns by political parties in Pakistan were observed. All political parties in Pakistan made greater use of social media to interact with the public, campaign updates, and focus on citizen's mobilization to vote (Saifuddin Ahmed & Skoric, 2014). *Almost a dozen volunteers are crowded into a mid-sized room. They all are busy on their computers interacting with voters through social media, especially Facebook,* (Klasra, themedialine.org, 2018).

Tangwani's small digital media team works until dawn to reach as many Internet users in his constituency (themedialine.org, 2018).

Tangwani himself and other political candidates are busy interacting with their supporters in of their constituencies through Facebook Live (themedialine.org, 2018).

(6)   Another more advanced feature of internet communication is the ability of the internet to identify the interests of users, by using certain internet tools, which can facilitate and empower political campaigners to spread particular information to the targeted audience according to their interests and affiliations (Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2018; Pariser, 2011)

7.7 Operationalization of Online Political Participation

Conceptually the measurement of political participation may include a wide range of activities defined by different authors ranging from mere political talk to voting, writing a letter to a political representative to protesting on some political issue, and attending demonstrations or political corner meetings. Every respondent may have his own idiosyncratic meaning of political participation according to any specific political activity. For example, a person involved in one or two political activities very frequently and deeply may differ from another person who is involved in a number of activities but not deeply and frequently involved. To overcome this issue, I employed both, the level or the intensity of political participation and breadth of political participation. The breadth of political participation corresponds to the number of activities a

person is involved and the level, or intensity of participation means how much a person is involved in a particular activity (Eveland & Scheufele, 2000).

Every researcher has operationalized political participation in its own peculiar way and employed several political activities with different combinations (Bale et al., 2019; R. Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Khalifa, 2011).

As people take part in a wide range and variety of activities and with variable frequency, handling multiple aspects of their participation is important. In order to closely measure political participation, both measures (breadth of political participation and level of political participation) have been encountered to prepare one index of one's online and offline political participation separately.

To measure and analyze *online political participation* the categories formulated were related to online political activities such as sending an online invitation for political meetings, online appeal for donations, posting, sharing and commenting, sharing online political slogans, political discussions on fcaebook and twitter, following twitter accounts, tweeting, re-tweeting on other's tweets, making any facebook page or group for political communication, joining facebook pages or groups of political parties or candidates.

Respondents were asked to respond in terms of frequency of their contribution in each activity, they perform, on a 5-point Likert scale. To illustrate, respondents were asked whether 'they invited their online friend on political meeting through social media', 'they made an online appeal for casting vote for any political candidate' or, if, 'they made an online appeal for donation for any political party or candidate' etc…

7.8 Conclusion

Concluding the above discussion, I would argue that much of the contemporary academic research on the effects of social media has put its foundation on political communication such as citizen-to-citizen online discussions, posting, sharing, commenting, tweeting, re-tweeting (Stieglitz et al., 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2012) and the political engagement of social media users such as party association, election canvassing, voting appeals, organizing political meetings (Enjolras et al., 2012). Mediating factors between social media use and effective political participation and political engagement have also been the focus of many researches i.e. informational use, political use (Y. Kim & Chen, 2016).

Considering the aforementioned arguments, social media; including blogs, social networking sites, microblogging applications, have changed the atmosphere of political engagement and participation and created new forms of political participation and engagement which are different from traditional forms (offline spaces) (Jung et al., 2011; Valenzuela et al., 2012).

7.9 Hypotheses Testing

7.9.1 Hypotheses

H_0: There is no association between social media political expression and online political participation of university students.

H_1: There is an association between social media political expression and online political participation of university students.

Regression Table 7.1 Prediction of Online Political Participation

Variable	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t	Durbin-Watson
Constant		.348	15.997	
Social Media Political Expression	.769*	.023	32.906	2.007

a. Dependent Variable: Online Political Participation. The table presents the regression model of social media political expression and Online Political Participation
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.632. Durbin Watson=2.007
Correlation is significant at * $p < .001$; **$p <. .01$; ***$p < .05$.

The statistical inferences provide evidence that does not support the null hypothesis. Hence, H_1 is supported by the statistical analysis. As predicted in hypothesis H_1, social media political expression has a significant and positive association ($\beta = .769$, $p < .001$) with online political participation. It indicates that if online political expression among university students is increased by one standard deviation, online political participation among university students is increased by 0.769 standard deviations. Regression analysis also supported this model as 63.2% of variance (Adjusted R^2) in online political participation through social media was explained by

variables included in the model. In the analysis, the value of Adjusted R^2 gives a pretty good explanation of online political participation.

These findings led to another regression model, comprising more than one explanatory variable, to look into the effects of independent variables (control variables) other than the focal independent variable (social media political expression). The researcher's investigation of the previous literature suggested many other indicators such as gender, age, study level, study department, family income level, and province, which may influence one's level of online political participation. To know the effect of other independent variables along with social media political expression, another regression model is analyzed.

Regression Table 7.2 Prediction of Online Political Participation with Control Variables

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t
Constant		1.968	4.122
Social Media Political Expression	.794*	.023	35.176
Student Age	.020	.068	.872
Gender of the Student	-.012***	.255	-1.047
Study Level of the student	-.034***	.096	-1.477
Study Department of the student	-.079*	.107	-3.550
Family Income	-.009	.000	-.402
Province of the student	-.006	.106	-.267

a. Dependent Variable: Online Political Participation.
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.637. Durbin Watson=2.007
Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05.

Table 7.2 shows the standardized regression coefficients along with standard error and value of t-test of all explanatory variables. Regression analysis also supported this model when including other explanatory variables (demographic characteristics of the students). Some of these control variables yielded a low but significant influence on the online political participation

of university students in Pakistan. Such as the association of gender of the students with online political participation (β = -.012, p < .05) was statistically significant. It indicates that if the gender is increased by one standard deviation, the online political participation among university students is decreased by 0.012 standard deviations and this is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables (social media political expression, age, study level, study department, province, and family income level) are kept constant.

Similarly, the association of study level with online political participation of the university students (β = -.034, p < .05) and the association of the study department with online political participation of the university students (β = -.079, p < .05) were statistically significant. This is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables, excluding the one which was measured, are kept constant. Table 7.2 shows that all statistically significant correlations are negatively associated with political participation.

The statistical inferences pointed out that the focal independent variable (social media political expression) still remained highly significant and associated (β = .794, p < .001) with online political participation of the university students (dependent variable) when the effects of other control variables were also measured. The overall model including demographic variables gives a pretty good explanation of online political participation. The variables included in this model accounted for 63.7% of total variance in online political participation. Gender, study level, and study department of the student were proved the only statistically significant control variables in this model. The other control variables in the demographic block such as age, province, and income level were statistically insignificant and not associated with online political participation.

Table 7.3 presents the regression analysis of demographic variables with their individual response categories. The effect of political expression on online political participation of different demographics i.e. on gender (male and female), on study discipline (social science students and physical science students), on province (students of the province of Punjab, students of the province of Sindh, students of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha and students of the province of Balochistan). First part of Table 7.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of online political participation of male (β = .708, p < .001) and female (β = .665, p < .001). It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of online political participation is increased by 0.708 standard deviations

among male university students and .665 among female university students. The value of Durbin-Watson was very well within the range (1.5 - 2.5). The statistics presented in Table 7.3 showed that male respondents exhibited a higher level of online political participation as a result of their social media political expression than female respondents.

Regression Table 7.3: Prediction of online political participation Comparing Gender, Study Discipline, and Province

Variable	Response Categories	Adjusted R^2	Standardized Coefficients[a][b] (β)	Std. Error	t	Durbin-Watson
1-Gender	Male	.652*	.708*	.029	26.092	1.926
	Female	.583*	.665*	.039	19.446	2.006
2-Study Discipline	Social Science	.702*	.788*	.030	24.674	2.001
	Physical Science	.568*	.654*	.034	20.179	1.994
3-Province	Punjab	.567*	.708*	.042	18.775	1.904
	Sindh	.617*	.787*	.043	19.386	1.643
	Khyber Pakhtunkha	.602*	.703*	.040	18.604	2.250
	Balochistan	.529*	.682*	.041	14.073	1.806

a. Dependent Variable: Online Political Participation.
b. Predictor: Social Media Political Expression, Gender, Study Discipline, Province
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05

Second part of Table 7.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of online political participation of the students from different disciplines. For more accurate and confined analysis of the study department, all study departments were further categorized into two main study disciplines (social science and physical science). This new variable was named as study discipline. The standardized regression coefficients of online political participation of social science students (β = .788, p < .001) and for physical science students (β = .654, p < .001) was noted. It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of online political participation is increased by 0.788 standard deviations among social science students and .654 among physical science students. The value of Durbin-

Watson was very well within the range (1.5 - 2.5). It can be inferred that social science students exhibited a higher level of online political participation as a result of their social media political expression than physical science students.

Third part of Table 7.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of online political participation of the students from different provinces i. e. for the students from the province of Punjab (β = .708, p < .001), the students from the province of Sindh (β = .787, p < .001), the students from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha (β = .703, p < .001) and for the students from the province of Balochistan (β = .682, p < .001) was noted. It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of online political participation is increased by 0.708 standard deviations among the students of the province of Punjab, 0.787 among students of the province of Sindh, 0.703 in the students of the province of Khyber Pakhtynkha and 0.682 in the students of the province of Balochistan.

Statistical analysis showed that the students from the province of Sindh exhibit a higher level of online political participation than the students of other provinces. Similarly, the analysis revealed that the students from the province of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkha have almost the same level of online political participation as a result of their social media political expression. The values of Adjusted R^2 give the overall explanation of the model with respect to each category of the variables and the results can be well generalized on the population.

7.9.2 Discussion

In this chapter, I focused on how political expression through social media encourages online political participation in university students of Pakistan. The study examines the relationship between university student's political use of social media and the level of their online political participation. The formulated hypothesis was "Political expression on social media is associated with online political participation of university students in Pakistan". Further, detailed analysis aimed at measuring the role of intervening variables, such as gender, age, study level, study discipline, family income, and province.

Two methods were adapted to illustrate the results of this study: descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics helped to evaluate major trends in youth's online political participation i.e. the level of participation in different types of online political activities, demographic differences in the indicators associated with online political participation.

Furthermore, to explore the association between social media political expression and online political participation of university students, inferential statistics were used.

While building the conceptual framework of online political participation in this chapter, I explored the construct of online political participation and its related concepts such as online invitations for political meetings, posting text, pictures, videos, and slogans of a political party, inviting friends for political processions, online canvassing, online appeal for donations (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Uhlaner, 2015; Valenzuela et al., 2012; Khalifa Ahmed, 2011). I was more interested in analyzing the causes of variation in political participation among different students by investigating multiple items of online political participation. Additionally, I was also interested to investigate the participation levels among different students and patterns of using different online political activities. Because it was hypothesized that each of these participation activities contributes to some extent or to a larger extent in the cumulative formulation of online political participation.

The students' participation level, in the mentioned online activities, was evaluated on the basis of several time frames such as never, rarely, sometimes, often, or always. However, researchers approach the conceptualization of online political participation, somehow, in different ways depending upon one's immediate research interests. Based on previous literature, several online political activities are found on which researchers have pondered. However, not all political participation activities are chosen by all researchers. Depending upon the cultural values of the society, social circumstances, and the political environment of the country, I selected some of these activities for the analysis which is most relevant in terms of the socio-political environment of Pakistan. There seem to be some political participation activities that are irrelevant and considered not useful for the measurement of political participation. This chapter attempts to investigate and disentangle all these concepts which have been conceptualized and operationalized in the above mentioned different dimensions.

The results from hypothesis testing revealed that there is a direct, positive, and strong association between social media political expression and online political participation of the university students in Pakistan. The overall model suggests a high correlation among social media political expression and online political participation as a cumulative index of all online political activities (63.2% variance explained). Second model of social media political

expression including other explanatory variables also demonstrated high significance explaining (63.7%) of variance, and has almost the same correlation with online political participation.

In all models of online political participation i.e. social media political expression with or without control variables, the political use of social media (political expression) has a strong and significant relationship with online political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Valenzuela et al., 2012, 2014; Zhu et al., 2019).

Additionally, the models of online political participation, based on gender, study discipline, and province, were also analyzed without controlling other demographic variables. These considerations proved very substantial for the study. Analyzing gender differences for the prediction of online political participation, the study revealed significant differences in online political participation of male and female students as a result of social media political expression i.e male students were more likely to engage in online political activities as compared to female students. Though, there has been found a positive association in the level of online political participation of both male and female students through the political use of social media, but female students participated comparatively less in online activities which are also supported by the previous literature (Ahmed, 2011; Zaheer, 2016)

However, I noticed that the difference in the level of participation in some online political activities was much higher among male students than the female students, whereas, in some activities, the participation level was almost the same. For example, male students sent more invitations to others for political meetings, showed better engagement in online political discussions, exhibited a higher appealing trends to vote for a certain political party, and more frequently shared political slogans than female students. However, the participation of male and female students was almost the same while appealing for donations and posting texts, pictures, and videos of political parties.

In the same manner, the study discipline-wise split model was also analyzed and potentially significant however minor differences were noted. This model also revealed that the social science students exhibited a higher level of online political participation as an outcome of social media political expression as compared to physical science students. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that some other significant differences are also observed in social science and physical science students in terms of their participation in different online political activities. Social science students appeared more active in inviting for political meetings and processions of

political candidates and political parties, posting political slogans, texts, pictures, and videos related to political content. However, physical science students were more active in sharing the received post related to political content.

Province wise split model envisaged substantial differences in the level of online political participation among the students of different provinces. The students from the province of Sindh tend to participate in online political activities more actively as a result of their social media political expression than the students from other provinces. The students from the province of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkha exhibited almost the same level of online political participation. The students from the province of Balochistan exhibited the lowest level of online political participation as a result of their social media political expression. However, no inferences could be drawn regarding the difference in participation level in specific political activities in reference to provinces.

Appeal for donating money for political party or candidate was one of the online political activities which contributed to the cumulative index of online political participation. However, the results of this online political activity were unlike other studies (Boulianne, 2015; Y. Kim & Chen, 2016; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). Investigations suggested that students appealed for donating money for a political party or political candidate very infrequently in comparison to all other online political activities (Willnat et al., 2013). Either very fewer students made an appeal for donating money or they did not actively participate in appealing for donating money. However, the lower level of participation in this activity was observed in all groups; male and female students, social science and physical science students, and the students from all provinces. Less participation in appealing money for a political party or candidate is possibly because of many social and economic reasons; in the political tradition of Pakistan, local political candidates are responsible for executing and bearing the expenses of their individual election campaigns and they try to recover when they get into the power (S. Yousaf, 2016). The rest of the monetary contributions are limited to party workers, supporters, or the people who are very closely and strongly associated with a political party or political candidates, says Chaudhry M. Saeed, chairman of local union council[62] (Eleazar, 2018, Dawn.com). Secondly, the economic condition of a common man in Pakistan is not good enough to contribute to a political campaign of a political party or political candidate. Third, the study's population was limited to

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[62] *Cost of Running an Election Campaign*, Article can be accessed from https://www.dawn.com/news/1416780

university students and donating money for a political party or political candidate is beyond the spending limits of the students as most of the students are dependent on their parents for living and educational expenses. Forth, donation appeal is not initiated by most of the mainstream political parties in Pakistan. In previous election, only PTI initiated donation appeal for their campaigns (Yousaf, 2015). Political candidates managed to arrange 5 to 6 million rupees and for the rest of funds, they look towards large donors (Javed, 2018).

Further, the investigations revealed that the highest level of online participation among university students was found in political activities of posting the text, pictures, videos, and slogans of any political party. Political workers, dedicated to executing election campaigns and in-routine political campaigns on social media through the media cells of political parties, used to bombard political posts about success stories, slogans, attack messages, party's updates, etc. on daily bases (Yousaf, 2015). These posts are further shared by supporters of political parties to their friend's networks (Jenkins & Carpentier, 2013).

Chapter 8. Political Expression on Social Media and Offline Political Participation

8.1 Introduction

It is important to understand that the concepts of online political expression and online political participation can not contribute effectively to flourish democratic norms if these expressions and activities do not translate into real-life political activities (participation in offline political activities). The true spirit of democracy can not be achieved fully unless the participant of the democratic process well contributes to functioning the political process of the country; the participation in the election process by electing right and deserving political candidate, the participation in political meetings, questioning political candidates, keeping check and balance not only through online expression but also through offline activities to force government officials and candidates to do righteous. Being more critical, political expression is considered as a passive political activity, which can and should further trigger and stimulate active offline political activities (Kamp, 2016; C. Vaccari et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the phenomenon of offline political participation as a consequence of online political expression coupled with the online political activism is endorsed by a plethora of previous and contemporary studies. All of these show a strong positive relation between online political expression and offline activism, concluding that the greater online political expression motivates people to take political actions in real-life settings (Althoff et al., 2017; Skoric & Zhu, 2016). Whether it is about passive online expressions such as casually liking and sharing the social media content or the active online expression such as commenting, discussing, getting into political controversies online, evaluating, reading and referring blogs, both encourage various levels/ forms of the offline political engagement in users (Gil De Zúñiga et al., 2009; C. Vaccari et al., 2015).

In this chapter, I will explore the association between social media political expression and the participation of university students in offline political activities. In the first part, I will build its conceptual framework with the support of previous literature capturing many dimensions, and in the second part, I will test the above mentioned proposition empirically. Additionally, I will also explore the association between online political participation and offline political participation of university students in Pakistan.

8.2 Conceptualization with Literature Support

Traditionally, political participation refers to the participation of citizens in activities that can influence the structure of government, the selection of officials, and policies (H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016, pp. 2–5). Researchers have figured out and consensus over many forms of traditional political participation and engagement (offline participation), such as election voting and political campaign activities; organizing and attending political gatherings, rallies and processions (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010), and informal political activities in local communities like corner meetings, contacting officials, and organizing and attending political speeches, face-to-face canvassing, spreading election awareness material, meeting politicians, attending other offline political events (Valenzuela et al., 2012; Verba et al., 1995) and protest participation (MacAfee & De Simone, 2012).

A global shift has been observed in political and election campaign strategies to encourage youngsters to participate in real-life political activities. Scholars throughout the world have identified many real-life political activities, which are specifically designed by political parties to engage the youth population. Empirical findings suggest that social media political expression encourages the youth to take part in the real-life political activities. Youth is now taking part in potential political activities, such as in elections, which has not been observed previously (T. Ahmad et al., 2019). Through a cross-sectional survey data, attending political meetings and rallies to support the political candidates is identified as an important offline political activity. Additionally, political workers and supporters use to wear party-symbols printed t-shirts, caps, or dupattas[63], young people play music, dance to support the political parties during political events, meetings, and rallies (Saud et al., 2020).

Scholars working on the effects of social media use on offline political participation conceptualized offline political participation with a number of activities with some variations. Similarly, appeal for donating money to a political party or candidate was also found as a potential contributor to offline political activities. Social media's political use encourages donating money to a political candidate or party (Boulianne, 2015; Y. Kim & Chen, 2016; Vissers & Stolle, 2014). As I have already discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 7), that in

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[63] Dupatta is a scarf like cultural specific part of dress code for women in Pakistan. It is commonly used as an essential part of women dress, traditionally most of the women covering their heads but some use it on shoulders or rolling around the neck.

Pakistan's political tradition, most of the political parties do not initiate fundraising appeals. In the election 2018, only PTI initiated donation appeal for their campaigns (S. Yousaf, 2016). However, this is probably because of the above mentioned reason that the researchers from the political setup of Pakistan also did not sufficiently address the offline political activity of 'appeal for donating money' in their studies.

Social media has become not only, the online public sphere for political discussion but a platform that initiates political discussions on offline public spheres also. Political discussions as a result of political expression in online networks promote viewpoint diversity and argument elaboration (H. G. I. L. D. E. Zúñiga et al., 2013). Researchers have acknowledged Political discussions as a very important indicator of offline political participation. When people came to discuss their political or social matters either in the online or offline virtual public sphere, they are more motivated to ready and take part in political activities (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1992). In addition to other offline political activities, many researchers found political discussions a very important offline activity that contributes to offline political participation of youngsters (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Hirzalla et al., 2011; Theocharis & Lowe, 2016; Uhlaner, 2015; Valenzuela et al., 2012; Willnat et al., 2013). Many other offline political activities include offline participation in election campaigning, attending political gatherings and demonstrations, inviting, organizing, and attending corner meetings of local candidates, door to door canvassing, distribution of campaign material, signing up as a volunteer or member of a campaign from the side of any political party or candidate, wearing wrist bands with party symbols, pasting party flags on cycles, motorcycle, cars, dresses and participation in electoral processes such as voting, transportation and lodging (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Valenzuela et al., 2012)

8.2.1 Social Media News Use leads to Offline Political Participation

The argument that 'the social media is increasingly used for seeking political news, which further, directly contributes to participatory politics' is supported by many researchers around the world (Shah et al., 2005). Though, social media's news usage pattern is tested in both situations; the intentional news seeking and the accidental exposure (unintentional) to the news by many researchers, and it is noteworthy that both have implications in online as well as offline political participation. Gil de Zúñiga (2012) concludes that social media news use has direct effects on people's offline political participation, but the social media use for social interaction

does not have a direct influence on offline political engagement, rather has an indirect effect when citizens express themselves politically. Another study suggests political expression as a mediator between social media news use and offline and online political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). Besides intentional news seeking through the internet and the social media as a predictor of political participation, the accidental news exposure (unintentional) through the internet and social media platforms has also been a top area of concern for contemporary researchers and proved as a strong indicator for both the offline and online political participation (K. S. Kim et al., 2013). Gil De Zúñiga et al. (2009) also found the relationship between cell phones and social media use and offline political participation and suggested a positive link between them. Further, they put forward their finding by stating that a sequence of behaviors leads to political participation.

However, I assume that the desire to get news or the accidental (unintentional) exposure to news through various social media platforms itself is an earlier stage of one's political orientation which directly or indirectly creates interest in politics and that helps in increasing political consciousness about the political and policy-making process.

The use of online media and its impact on offline behaviors of the individuals has faced a great deal of investigation in political science, 'communication and media studies', and Psychology. Further, we also notice that the topic of offline political participation has been the focus of many of the researchers in these areas. These studies also investigated those patterns of the use of online communication which provoke offline activism such as offline political participation, attending political rallies, corner meetings, political campaigning, and signing petitions (Juris, 2005; Loader, 2008; Skoric & Zhu, 2016).

8.2.2 General use of Social Media leads to Offline Political Participation

Apart from the use of social media for specific purposes; news seeking, which has been discussed in the above literature, the comprehensive body of research also investigates the relationship between the general use of social media and people's online and offline political participation and civic engagement. On the way to analyze the offline political participation fostered by social media communication, we encounter many studies on Asian and Western democratic and non-democratic countries, which seek to analyze the phenomenon of offline

political participation using microblogging applications and social networking sites (Chan et al., 2012; Skoric & Poor, 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2009, 2012; H. G. I. L. D. E. Zúñiga et al., 2013).

The question of 'whether political or non-political use of social media influences the online or offline political participation in established democratic societies, like Pakistan also, touched by many previous and contemporary scholars. They argue that political participation in democratic societies may work to enhance the political participation of citizens to strengthen the democratic process, to raise socio-political issues, participation in the decision and policy-making process, signing petitions, to maintain a continuous process of accountability, the consciousness about important national and foreign policy issues, highlighting the issues of working-class, etc. Nevertheless, the inability to participate in the political process may lead to deprivation of all the aforementioned subjects (Verba, 2014).

Nevertheless, it is also noteworthy, that most of the studies, on this particular phenomenon, are conducted in western democratic societies and the United States. These investigations result in positive relationships and confirm that the general uses of social media also enhance youngsters' offline and online political and civic participation (Baumgartner & Morris, 2006; Bode et al., 2014; Gil De Zúñiga et al., 2009; Valenzuela et al., 2009, 2012). Many of them suggesting that internet use alone is unlikely to change the discourse; rather it can facilitate participation (Hargittai & Shaw, 2013). Studies on Non-US social media users also corroborated that the social media use increased offline or online political engagement e.g. on Swedish social media users (Holt et al., 2013), social media users in Hong Kong (Tang & Lee, 2013), in Germany, Italy, and UK (Valeriani & Vaccari, 2016), in Chile (Valenzuela et al., 2014) and in China (W. Lin & Zhang, 2014). Through the meta-analysis of 36 studies, Boulianne (2015) also endorsed a positive relationship between general social media use and political participation.

One aspect of political participation demonstrates that the online and offline political participation of university students is influenced by the time spent for political purposes on Facebook. However different patterns of offline participation have been found in regard to male and female university students; male students exhibited more offline political participation than female students (Zaheer, 2016). In addition to this, various other researchers also figured out demographic differences on the basis of male and female, study level, and study discipline (Khalifa, 2011). Masiha et al., (2018) also found a significant correlation between facebook

usage and political participation. Increased facebook use, in terms of time spent and friends' list on facebook, is likely to increase political participation among youth.

8.2.3 Social Media Political Expression leads to Offline Political Participation

Political discourse on social media has the ability to influence the civic and political engagement, mobilization of public, creating interest in political activities, protest mobilization and to target segmented audience i. e youth (T. Ahmad et al., 2019; Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Kahne & Bowyer, 2018; C. Vaccari et al., 2013; Yamamoto et al., 2015).

Many other studies which are based on the cross-sectional data reinforce that more political expression on social media motivates to take part in real-life political activities (Althoff et al., 2017; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Skoric & Zhu, 2016; Tang & Lee, 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2012). Survey results from the younger population reveal that social media has been used for accessing and discussing political information. Further, a positive association has been found between political expression on social media and offline political participation for both facebook and twitter (Effing et al., 2011; Ham & Pap, 2018; Skoric & Zhu, 2016).

This has been argued earlier that the research body shows an increasing trend and significance of the intentional and accidental news seeking as important contributors to political participation without any intervening factors. Nevertheless, many scholars emphasize the contribution of social influences; the network friendship, on social media users, that might encourage or even accelerate the process of offline political engagement (Althoff et al., 2017; R. K. Gibson & McAllister, 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2012; Zhang & Chia, 2006). The accumulation of online social network of friends have the probability to accelerate the process of offline participation; greater the network of friends, the greater are the chances to encounter diverse opinion and engaging in political activities (Valenzuela et al., 2012).

The intensity of the social bond on online social networks has a positive association with offline political participation (R. K. Gibson & McAllister, 2013) and traditional political participation of social media users in Singapore (Skoric et al., 2009). Similarly, the intensity of engagement with one's online friends' community was positively associated with both the online and offline political participation (Bode, 2012). However, the analysis of friendship driven online activities and interest-driven online activities also proved effective in encouraging online as well as offline political activities. Kahne & Bowyer (2018) conclude that the size of friends'

online networks encourages political activity interacting via both the Friendship-driven and Interest-driven online activities.

8.3 Offline Political Participation in Protest Movements

Political scholars and communication and media scholars both are trying to figure out the relationship between social media's political expression and political participation among people both in democratic (Skoric et al., 2016; H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016) and non-democratic political regimes (Valenzuela et al., 2014). Analysis of different studies shows that there are varied results on mobilizing effects of the political use of social media in democratic regimes. Some suggesting that political expression of the social media allows offline political engagement along with online engagement of the users (H. G. de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Gil de Zúñiga, 2012), some asserting that social media' mobilization effect emerges when certain conditions are met (Baek, 2015) and some researches focusing upon some intermediate factors affecting the communication process through social media (Housholder & LaMarre, 2014; Y. Kim & Chen, 2016). Whereas, in non-democratic political setups, the role of social media is analyzed, presumably, its ability to destabilize and shatter the non-democratic established political norms (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012). Online communication has closely been linked to political communication, whether intended for democratic societies or non-democratic societies and analyzed by many researchers in the context of political activities, election campaigns, voters' mobilization and protest information, organization and mobilization (Bermudez, 2012; Biswas et al., 2014; Gil de Zúñiga, 2012; Riezebos et al., 2011; Skoric et al., 2016; H. "Chris" Yang & DeHart, 2016).

Political expression through social media during protest movements provides another dimension of analysis. According to Jost et al. (2018), the political expression on social media platforms such as Facebook groups, pages, whatsApp and twitter help during protest movements in two ways; they facilitate and expedite the exchange of information to organize protest activities, such as the information about time, place and route of demonstration, the transportation facilities, police presence, medical services, and emergency support; secondly, they facilitate the exchange of emotional and motivational expression to support protest activities, including images depicting and showing the brutality of the issue, anxiety,

troublesome situation, political and social concerns and the messages provoking anger, etc (2018, pp. 85–118).

Extensive use of internet-based social applications was observed even in middle eastern countries to be an effective tool for mobilizing young people, even though these applications are under the control of ruling governments. One of the popular examples is the Arab spring movement in early 2011. Internet-based social applications have played a dynamic contribution, via multi-dimensional sourcing, to political and social changes in the world sphere in recent years (C. F. Fletcher et al., 2012).

In the case of the Arab Spring, according to a survey, nine out of ten Syrian, and Tunisian responded that they used facebook to participate, organize these protests, and spread awareness. Moreover, in the same survey 28% Egyptians and 29 % Tunisian responded that the sanctions over the use of facebook strongly discontinued the normal flow of communication to spread the information about protests. In the context of Egypt's Tahrir Square protests, social networks, especially facebook played a very significant role in how citizens cultivate their opinion about in which political activity to participate, the logistics of protest, and the likelihood of success (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). The study further reveals that the primary source of learning about political protests was interpersonal communication using facebook then phone contact and face-to-face conversation. Controlling other factors, surprisingly, respondent participated in the protests on the first day (2012, pp. 363–364)

Similarly, in 2008, during the protest organized against FARC[64] with the name of "One Million Voices Against FARC", the information regarding this protest was spread through a Facebook page. The momentum spawned by the Facebook page was successful to organize a protest against FARC with 5 million Colombians.

The issue of Indian occupied Kashmir spilled over social media after the implementation of article 370 of Indian constitution was revoked on 05 August 2019. As a result, social media users were sharing the hashtag #RedForKashmir as a sign to protest against the Indian government action. #RedForKashmir was a protest movement that spread and got viral on social media platforms despite the sanctions over the internet and telecommunication in Indian

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[64] FARC ,The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, is a guerrilla organization in Columbia, formed in 1964. FARC's armed forces were invoved in assasinations, hijackings, bombing for political and economic objectives. Political unrest escalated in 2008 when Columbian troops attacked on FARC camps. "One Million Voices Against FARC" was a protest organised by general public to break the silence against FARC's brutal treatment.

occupied Kashmir. Within hours, Twitter and Facebook feeds were filled with posts about Kashmir and the display pictures were red. The content of posts and tweets was depicting the anxiety and misery of Kashmiri people[65] (www.News18.com). The international Pakistani community used social media (facebook groups and WhatsApp) to organize protests in different cities mainly in Germany, UK, and America. Social media facilitated the exchange of information about the organization of demonstration activities, such as information about the place, time, and route of demonstration, police coordination, media coverage, etc., against brutality in Indian occupied Kashmir.

In 2016, when a coup attempt was made by one Turkish military section and tried to unrest the government, President Tayyab Erdogan sent a video message through social networks and then this message became viral through multiple social networks including facebook.

In this historic incident, social media is used as a catalyst force to mobilize people to resist the military coup against Tayyip Erdogan's democratic rule in Turkey. Through facetime and twitter, Erdogan approached his millions of followers.

'The tweet, urging people to go out to airports and the public squares to resist the coup, went viral to his over eight million followers and thousands of Erdogan supporters answered the call, they made their own use of social media[66]', says Grenier (DW.com, 2016).

> 'Milletimizi demokrasimize ve milli iradeye sahip çıkmak üzere meydanlara, havalimanlarına davet ediyorum'.
>
> (English translation) 'I invite our nation to squares and airports to protect our democracy and national will'.

Nonetheless, my analysis through many studies suggests that there may be a significant difference, i.e. in the level of mobilization, people's age group, and demographics, between those who are mobilized to certain actions (civic or political) through social media and those who are mobilized through established civil society and political organizations. Enjolras et al.'s analysis suggest that people who are mobilized through social media are particularly of younger age and low socio-economic status (2013, pp. 890–908).

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[65] Internet article can be accessed from   https://www.news18.com/news/buzz/redforkashmir-why-dps-on-social-media-have-turned-red-as-govt-scraps-article-370-2258559.html

[66] Grenier, E., (2016). Erdogan and social media: Uses and Abuses. Article can be accessed from https://www.dw.com/en/erdogan-and-social-media-use-and-abuse/a-19413205

There is a dire need to explore the missing areas or the less explored areas associated with political participation more and many researchers all over the world are still working on analyzing the relationship between political expression and political participation with various uses of social media; political use of social media, news seeking through social media and general uses of social media, and with other factors such as the social media as social capital, offline political behaviors and actions, and the political biases on social media.

8.4 Association between Online and Offline Political Participation

A large research body is available on the effects of social media's online communication on the online and offline activities of its users. Many scholars have consensus over the subversive potentials of social media to affect both online and offline participation of users (T. Ahmad et al., 2019; Mahmud & Amin, 2017). Some of the studies on social media political communication have focused on just the effects on offline participation and some have tried to make a comparative analysis of its effects both on online and offline participation. It has been argued that the virtual environment (online platforms) facilitates activities in a real environment. Online communication media has not only supplemented the effects of online political activities but also encouraged and facilitated offline political activities. The scholarship in this concern suggests that the social media users are expected to engage more in offline political activities than social media non-users (Gil De Zúñiga et al., 2009; Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010; MacAfee & De Simone, 2012; H. G. I. L. D. E. Zúñiga et al., 2013). Moreover, the information exchange, through social media and social media based political activities, is positively related to canonical political participation, for example, joining petitions, contacting media, and participation in demonstrations (W. Lin & Zhang, 2014).

Many scholars analyzed the effects of online political expression separately on online and offline participatory behaviors and found a similar level of online and offline participation (T. Ahmad et al., 2019). On the other hand, some suggested varying levels of online and offline political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014). Ahmad et al. (2019) explored the impact of online political activities on political efficacy and real-life political activism among university students of Pakistan. Findings revealed a strong correlation between online political participation and offline political participation. Some studies found that the effects of social media communication on offline participation (political demonstrations) are subject to users'

characteristics. For example, the users of younger age and of low socio-economic status were more mobilized through social media to the political demonstrations in Norway (Enjolras et al., 2013).

Many studies have analyzed and endorsed the impacts of popular social media platforms (facebook and twitter) for facilitating offline activities. However, despite the argument of DiGrazia et al., (2013) that, the social media political expression can be used as a valid indicator of one's offline behavior, the core question about 'achieved level of offline participation as a result of online expression' still needs a lot of scholarly attention by the communication researchers. However, in an ongoing study, I want to analyze (1) the effects of social media political expression on real-life political participation, what is generally called 'offline participation' (2) is there some type of homogeneity/ synchronization in online political participation and offline political participation; the association between the level of participation in both the online and offline activities of university students, and finally, (3) demographic wise (gender, study discipline, and province) comparison of university students' online and offline political participation.

8.5 Operationalization of Offline Political Participation

Offline political participation was also measured taking into account both, level or intensity of political participation and the breadth of political participation. To analyze o*ffline political participation* the categories formulated were related to real-life political activities such as offline canvassing, political discussions in classrooms, political discussions with family, offline campaigning, attending or delivering speeches, distributing campaign material, wearing caps, T-shirts showing political affiliation, placing campaign stickers or flags of a favorite political party, and collecting money for running a political campaign.

Respondents were asked to rate the level of their participation against every above mentioned real-life activity on 5- point Likert scale ranging between 'Never' to 'Always' and a cumulative index was formed combining all these items.

8.6 Hypotheses Testing

8.6.1 Hypotheses (Offline Political Participation)

H_0: There is no association between social media political expression and offline political participation of university students.

H_1: There is an association between social media political expression and offline political participation of university students.

Regression Table 8.1 Prediction of Offline Political Participation

Variable	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t	Durbin-Watson
Constant		.378	20.753	
Offline Political Expression	.540*	.025	17.565	1.789

a. Dependent Variable: Offline Political Participation. The table presents the regression model of social media political expression and Offline Political Participation
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.422. Durbin Watson=1.789
Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05.

The statistical inferences provide evidence that does not support the null hypothesis. Hence, H_1 is supported by statistical analysis. As predicted in hypothesis H_1, social media political expression has a significant and positive association (β = .540, p < .001) with offline political participation. It indicates that if online political expression among university students is increased by one standard deviation, offline political participation among university students is increased by 0.540 standard deviations. Regression analysis also supported this model as 42.2% of variance (Adjusted R^2) in offline political participation through social media was explained by variables included in the analysis.

These findings led to another regression model, comprising more than one explanatory variable, to look into the effects of independent variables (control variables) other than the focal independent variable (social media political expression). The researcher's investigation of the previous literature suggested many other indicators such as gender, age, study level, study

department, family income level, and province, which may influence one's level of offline political participation. To know the effect of other independent variables along with social media political expression, another regression model is analyzed.

Table 8.2 shows the standardized regression coefficients along with standard error and value of t-test of all explanatory variables. Regression analysis also supported this model when including other explanatory variables (demographic characteristics of the students). Some of these control variables yielded a low but significant influence on offline political participation of university students in Pakistan. Such as the association of gender of the students with offline political participation ($\beta = -.081$, $p < .01$) was statistically significant. It indicates that if the gender is increased by one standard deviation, the offline political participation among university students is decreased by 0.081 standard deviations and this is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables (social media political expression, age, study level, study department, province, and family income level) are kept constant.

Regression Table 8.2 Prediction of Offline Political Participation with Control Variables

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t
Constant		1.985	4.372
Social Media Political Expression	.618*	.023	21.557
Student Age	.028	.068	.967
Gender of the Student	-.081**	.257	-2.796
Study Level of the student	-.014	.117	-.461
Study Discipline	-.063***	.249	-2.233
Family Income	-.022	.000	-.765
Province of the student	-.057***	.107	-2.027

a.   Dependent Variable: Offline Political Participation.
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.415. Durbin Watson=1.630
Correlation is significant at * $p < .001$; **$p <. .01$; ***$p < .05$.

Similarly, the association of study discipline with offline political participation of the university students ($\beta = -.063$, $p < .05$) and the association of province with offline political

participation of the university students (β = -.057, p < .05) were statistically significant. This is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables, excluding the one which was measured, are kept constant. Moreover, Table 8.2 shows that all statistically significant correlations are negatively associated with offline political participation.

The statistical inferences pointed out that the focal independent variable (social media political expression) still remained highly significant and associated (β = .618, p < .001) with offline political participation of the university students (dependent variable) when the effects of other control variables were also measured. The overall model including demographic variables gives a pretty good explanation of online political participation. The variables included in this model accounted for 41.5% of the total variance in online political participation. Gender, study discipline, and the province of the student were proved the only statistically significant control variables in this model. The other control variables in the demographic block such as age, study level, and income level were statistically insignificant and not associated with offline political participation.

Regression Table 8.3 Prediction of offline political participation Comparing Gender, Study Discipline, and Province

Variable	Response Categories	Adjusted R^2	Standardized Coefficients[a][b] (β)	Std. Error	t	Durbin-Watson
1-Gender	Male	.399*	.631*	.034	16.655	1.501
	Female	.254*	.439*	.037	10.354	1.696
2-Study Discipline	Social Science	.403*	.636*	.035	15.907	1.495
	Physical Science	.332*	.507*	.042	12.674	1.275
3-Province	Punjab	.371*	.613*	.059	18.775	1.526
	Sindh	.410*	.644*	.067	19.386	1.102
	Khyber Pakhtunkha	.346*	.590*	.042	18.604	1.483
	Balochistan	.294*	.447*	.049	14.073	1.448

a.   Dependent Variable: Offline Political Participation.
b. Predictor: Social Media Political Expression, Gender, Study Discipline, Province
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05

Table 8.3 presents the regression analysis of demographic variables with their individual response categories. First part of this table represents the standardized regression coefficients of offline political participation of male (β = .631, p < .001) and female (β = .439, p < .001). It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of offline political participation is increased by 0.631 standard deviations among male university students and .438 among female university students. The value of Durbin-Watson was within the range of (1 - 2.5). The statistics presented in Table 8.3 showed that male respondents exhibited a higher level of offline political participation as a result of their social media political expression than female respondents.

Second part of Table 8.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of offline political participation of the students from different disciplines. For more accurate and confined analysis of the study department, all study departments were further categorized into two main study disciplines (social science and physical science). This new variable was named as study discipline. The standardized regression coefficients of offline political participation of social science students (β = .636, p < .001) and for physical science students (β = .507, p < .001) was noted. It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of offline political participation is increased by 0.636 standard deviations among social science students and .507 among physical science students. The value of Durbin-Watson was within the range of (1 - 2.5). It can be inferred that social science students exhibited a higher level of offline political participation as a result of their social media political expression than physical science students.

Third part of Table 8.3 represents the standardized regression coefficients of offline political participation of the students from different provinces i. e for the students from the province of Punjab (β = .613, p < .001), the students from the province of Sindh (β = .644, p < .001), the students from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha (β = .590, p < .001) and for the students from the province of Balochistan (β = .447, p < .001) was noted. It indicates that if the social media political expression is increased by one standard deviation, the level of offline political participation is increased by 0.613 standard deviations among the students of the province of Punjab, 0.644 among students of the province of Sindh, 0.590 in the students of the province of Khyber Pakhtynkha and 0.447 in the students of the province of Balochistan.

Statistical analysis showed that the students from the province of Sindh exhibit a higher level of offline political participation than the students of other provinces. Similarly, the analysis revealed that the students from the province of Balochistan have the lowest level of offline political participation as a result of their social media political expression. The values of Adjusted R^2 give the overall explanation of the model with respect to each category of the variables and the results can be well generalized on the population.

8.6.2 Hypotheses (Association of Online Political Participation and Offline Political Participation)

H_0: Online political participation (Online PP) is not positively associated with offline political participation (Offline PP) of university students.

H_1: Online political participation (Online PP) is positively associated with offline political participation (Offline PP) of university students.

The statistical inferences provide evidence that does not support the null hypothesis. Hence, H_1 is supported by statistical analysis. As predicted in hypothesis H_1, online political participation has a significant and positive association ($\beta = .469$, $p < .001$) with offline political participation. It indicates that if online political participation among university students is increased by one standard deviation, offline political participation among university students is increased by 0.469 standard deviations. The regression model tells that 21.9% of variance (Adjusted R^2) in offline political expression is explained by the explanatory variables included in the analysis.

Regression Table 8.4 Online Political Participation predicts Offline Political Participation

Variable	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t	Durbin-Watson
Constant		.512	12.761	
Online Political Participation	.469*	.028	14.529	1.416

a. Dependent Variable: Offline Political Participation. The table presents the regression model of Online Political Participation and Offline Political Participation
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.219. Durbin Watson=1.416
Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05.

Although the analysis explained significant relationships that supported hypothesis H1, the suggested model did not prove a good fit for our collected data (Adjusted R^2=.219, p < .001).

These findings led to another regression model, comprising more than one explanatory variable, to look into the effects of independent variables (control variables) other than the focal independent variable (social media political expression). This proposed model (Table 8.5) figured out more good to fit the collected data value (Adjusted R^2=.368, p < .001) along with the value of Durbin-Watson closer to 2 (1.701).

Regression Table 8.5 Online Political Participation predicts Offline Political Participation with Control Variables

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients[a] (β)	Std. Error	t
Constant		2.298	3.620
Online Political Participation	.412*	.026	13.896
Gender of the Student	-.361*	.294	-12.042
Study Level of the student	.069***	.135	2.229
Province of the student	-.118*	.124	-3.969

a.Dependent Variable: Offline Political Participation.
Model Summary: Sample size=750. Adjusted R^2=.368. Durbin Watson=1.701
Correlation is significant at * p < .001; **p <. .01; ***p < .05.

Table 8.5 shows the standardized regression coefficients along with standard error and value of t-test of all explanatory variables. Regression analysis also supported this model when including other explanatory variables (demographic characteristics of the students). Adding more explanatory variables (Gender, study level, and province) in the model explained 36.8% of variance in offline political participation Some of these control variables yielded high and some yielded a very low but significant influence on offline political participation of university students in Pakistan. Such as the association of gender of the students with offline political participation (β = -.361, p < .001) was statistically significant. It indicates that if the gender is increased by one standard deviation, the offline political participation among university students

is decreased by 0.361 standard deviations and this is true only if the effects of other explanatory variables (social media political expression, age, study level, study department, province, and family income level) are kept constant.

Similarly, the association of study level with offline political participation of the university students (β = .069, p < .05) and the association of province with offline political participation of the university students (β = -.118, p < .001) were statistically significant. However, statistics show that if online political participation is increased by one standard deviation, offline political participation is increased by .412 standard deviation (β = .412, p < .001)

8.6.3 Comparison of Online and Offline Political Participation

Table 8.6 Paired Samples Statistics

		Statistics	Bias	Bootstrap[a]		
				SE	Lower	Upper
Online Political	Mean	17.23	-.01	.20	16.83	17.65
Participation	SD	5.570	-.016	.138	5.296	5.833
	SE Mean	.203				
Offline Political	Mean	13.62	-.02	.18	13.26	13.94
Participation	SD	4.880	-.019	.136	4.601	5.127
	SE Mean	.178				
Online PP & Offline PP	Correlation	.469	-.001	.032	.400	.530

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples. 95% Confidence Interval (CI)

SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750

In table 8.6, the difference in the levels of respondent's online and offline participation was measured with respect to their mean difference. On average participants were engage in online political participation (M= 17.23, SD= 5.570, SE= 0.20), than the participants who were engage in offline political participation (M= 13.62, SD= 4.880, SE= 0.18). Inferences can be made from the findings presented in table 8.6, that a statistically significant difference exists between online political participation and offline political participation of the respondents. The respondent's level of participation in online activities is more than the level of participation in

offline activities. The difference between the means of online political participation and offline participation was sufficiently large to explain it as a true mean difference (17.23- 13.62= 3.612) and not a possible chance result.

Table 8.6 also presents paired sample correlations (0.469, p < .001), along with bootstrap for correlations (0.400-0.530, SE= .032) of online political participation and offline political participation. It inferred that online political participation is correlated with offline political participation (46.9%) with significance p <.001.

Table 8.7 Paired Samples Test and Bootstrap (Paired Differences)

Online PP - Offline PP	Mean	SD	SE Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
	3.612	5.416	.198	3.224	4.000	18.26	749	.000

Bootstrap for Paired Samples Test						
Online PP - Offline PP	Mean	Bias	SE	Bootstrap^a 95% Confidence Interval		Sig. (2-tailed)
	3.612.	.008	.202	3.214	3.975	.001

a.   Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples. 95% Confidence Interval
      SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750

Table 8.7 presents paired sample differences in online political participation and offline political participation. This mean difference (3.612), bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa), 95% confidence interval CI (3.214-3.975) was significant t (749)= 18.263, p =.001. The data in table 8.7 provides 95% confidence interval for the mean difference. However, a more strong and bias-corrected 95% confidence interval using bootstrapping is also calculated in Table 8.7, ensuring that in 95 % of the samples, the interval contains the true mean difference.

Cohen's d signified a medium-sized effect, d=0.68, provided 95% Confidence Interval (.605-.769). However, besides its goodness for being statistically significant, this finding has a very substantial effect.

8.6.3.1 Comparison of Online and Offline Political Participation: Gender wise

Table 8.8 Paired Sample Statistics of Online and Offline political participation: Gender wise

Gender		Online Political Participation			Offline Political Participation		
		Mean	SD	SE Mean	Mean	SD	SE Mean
Male		17.92	5.706	.278	15.39	5.192	.253
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	17.41	5.340		14.85	4.857	
Confidence Interval	Upper	18.44	6.031		15.89	5.520	
Female		16.34	5.268	.290	11.35	3.270	.180
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	15.81	4.801		11.01	2.883	
Confidence Interval	Upper	16.95	5.752		11.70	3.652	

SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750, p < .05

In table 8.8, the difference in the levels of online and offline political participation was measured comparing the participation level of male and female participants with respect to their mean difference. Table shows the results of the paired samples i.e. means, standard deviations, and standard error mean. On the average, male participants were engage in online political participation (M= 17.92, SD= 5.706, SE= 0.278), than the male participants who were engage in offline political participation (M= 15.39, SD= 5.192, SE= 0.253). In so far female participants were engage in online political participation (M= 16.34, SD= 5.268, SE= 0.290), than the female participants who were engage in offline political participation (M= 11.35, SD= 3.270 SE= 0.180).

The data shows a significant difference in online political participation and offline political participation in reference to gender. In this regard, statistically significant difference exists between online political participation of male participants (M= 17.92, p < 0.05) and female participants (M= 16.34, p < 0.05). Subsequently, as far as offline political participation is concerned, a significantly higher difference in the level of participation has been observed between male participants (Mean= 15.39, p < 0.05) and female participants (Mean= 11.35, p=0.05).

Inferences can be made from the findings presented in table 8.8, that statistically significant difference exists between both online political participation (17.92- 16.34= 1.58) and offline political participation (15.39- 11.35= 4.04) of male and female respondents.

Bootstrapping is also calculated on 1000 number of samples (95% confidence interval) of the same data for accuracy measures to avoid biases. It ensures 95% confidence interval that the population means fall within the range i.e. for online political participation of male participants (17.41-18.44) and for female participants (15.81-16.95). However, bootstrapping mean in case of offline political participation of male participants (14.85-15.89) and for female participants (11.01-11.70) was noted.

Mean scores indicate that males respondents more actively participate in both online political activities and offline political activities as compared to females respondents. Moreover, table statistics also point that the level of online political participation is higher in comparison to offline participation in the case of both male respondents and females respondents.

Table 8.9 Paired Samples Test with Bootstrap statistics: Gender wise comparison of Online and Offline Political Participation

Gender	Mean	SD	SE Mean	Bootstrapª- BCa95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Male Online PP - Offline PP	2.537	5.452	.266	2.012	3.033	9.547	420	.000
Female Online PP - Offline PP	4.988	5.055	.279	4.416	5.580	17.899	328	.000

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples. 95% Confidence Interval
   SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750

Table 8.9 presents paired sample differences in online political participation and offline political participation of male and female respondents. This mean difference in online and offline political participation in male (2.537), bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa), 95% confidence interval CI (2.012-3.033) was significant t (420) = 9.547, p =.001. Similarly, mean difference in online and offline political participation in female (4.988), bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa), 95% confidence interval CI (4.416- 5.580) was significant t (328) = 17.899, p =.001.

The difference in online political participation and offline political participation among males (2.537) is not as much as in the online and offline political participation of females (4.988). Female respondents participate very less actively in offline political activities as they participate in online political activities. The difference between the means of online political participation (Mean difference= 1.58) and offline participation (Mean difference= 4.04) between male and female respondents were sufficiently large to explain it as a true mean difference and not a possible chance result.

8.6.3.2 Comparison of Online and Offline Political Participation: Study Discipline wise

Table 8.10 Paired Sample Statistics of Online and Offline political participation of Study Discipline

Gender		Online Political Participation			Offline Political Participation		
		Mean	SD	SE Mean	Mean	SD	SE Mean
Social Science		17.94	5.603	.289	13.95	4.771	.246
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	17.37	5.227		13.46	4.350	
Confidence Interval	Upper	18.51	5.951		14.43	5.127	
Physical science		16.02	5.453	.282	13.08	4.787	.257
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	15.97	4.986		12.55	4.540	
Confidence Interval	Upper	17.06	5.861		13.68	5.310	

SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750, p <.05

In table 8.10, the difference in the levels of online and offline political participation was measured comparing the participation level of the participants of social science discipline and the participants of physical science discipline with respect to their mean difference. Table shows the results of the paired samples i.e. means, standard deviations, and standard error mean. On average, the participants of social science engaged in online political participation (M= 17.94, SD= 5.603, SE= 0.289), than the participants of social science students who were engaged in offline political participation (M= 13.95, SD= 4.771, SE= 0.246). In so far, the participants of physical science engaged in online political participation (M= 16.02, SD= 5.453, SE= 0.282), than the participants of physical science who were engaged in offline political participation (M= 13.08, SD= 4.787 SE= 0.257).

The data shows a significant difference in online political participation and offline political participation in reference to study discipline. In this regard, statistically significant difference exists between online political participation of the participants of social science and the participants of physical science (Mean difference= 1.92, p < 0.05). Subsequently, as far as offline political participation is concerned, a significant but low difference in the level of participation has been observed between social science participants and physical science participants (Mean difference= 0.87, p < 0.05).

Bootstrapping is also calculated on 1000 number of samples (95% confidence interval) of the same data for accuracy measures to avoid biases. It ensures 95% confidence interval that the population means fall within the range. i.e. for online political participation of the participants of social science (17.37-18.51) and for the participants of physical science (15.97-17.02). However, bootstrapping mean in case of offline political participation of the participants of social science (13.46-14.43) and for the participants of physical science (12.55-13.68) was noted.

Mean scores indicate that the participants of social science more actively participate in both online political activities and offline political activities as compared to the participants of physical science. Moreover, table statistics also point that the difference in the level of offline political participation of both social science participants and physical science participants is not that much higher.

Table 8.11 Paired Samples Test with Bootstrap statistics: Study Discipline wise comparison of Online and Offline Political Participation

Study Discipline	Mean	SD	SE Mean	Bootstrap[a]- BCa95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Social Science								
Online PP - Offline PP	3.990	5.131	.265	3.475	4.501	15.046	374	.000
Physical Science								
Online PP - Offline PP	3.120	5.670	.293	2.704	3.869	11.057	374	.000

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples. 95% Confidence Interval, SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750

The mean difference in online political participation and offline political participation among social science participants (3.990) is higher than the mean difference in the online and offline political participation of physical science participants (3.120). The main difference in political participation among social science participants and physical science participants lies in their online political participation. The participants of physical science discipline less actively in online political activities as the participants of social science discipline do. The difference between the means of online political participation (Mean difference= 1.92) between social science participants and physical science participants was sufficiently large to explain it as a true mean difference and not a possible chance result.

8.6.3.3 Comparison of Online Political Participation and Offline Political Participation: Province wise

Table 8.12 Paired Sample Statistics of Online and Offline Political Participation of Province

Province		Online Political Participation			Offline Political Participation		
		Mean	SD	SE Mean	Mean	SD	SE Mean
Punjab		16.78	5.702	.466	14.20	4.155	.240
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	15.88	4.920		13.70	3.839	
Confidence Interval	Upper	17.69	6.359		14.68	4.489	
Sindh		17.33	4.992	.408	14.97	4.241	.330
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	16.59	4.420		13.83	3.539	
Confidence Interval	Upper	18.15	5.519		15.49	4.474	
Khyber Pakhtunkha		16.70	6.322	.516	14.01	4.619	.385
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	15.84	5.634		13.41	4.263	
Confidence Interval	Upper	17.83	6.909		14.96	5.178	
Balochistan		15.49	5.604	.48	12.47	4.500	.384
Bootstrap 95%	Lower	14.80	4.824		12.05	4.141	
Confidence Interval	Upper	16.77	6.201		13.71	5.227	

SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750, $p < .05$

In table 8.12, the difference in the levels of online and offline political participation was measured comparing the participation level of the participants from the province of Punjab, the province of Sindh, the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha, and the province of Balochistan in

respect to their mean difference. Table shows the results of the paired samples i.e. means, standard deviations, and standard error mean. On the average, the participants from the province of Punjab were engage in online political participation (M= 16.78, SD= 5.702, SE= 0.466) and offline political participation (M= 14.20, SD= 4.155, SE= 0.240). In so far, the participants from the province of Sindh were engage in online political participation (M= 17.33, SD= 4.992, SE= 0.408) and offline political participation (M= 14.97, SD= 4.241, SE= 0.330). The participants from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhaw were engage in online political participation (M= 16.70, SD= 6.332, SE= 0.516) and offline political participation (M= 14.01, SD= 4.619, SE= 0.385). The participants from the province of Balochistan were engage in online political participation (M= 15.49, SD= 5.604, SE= 0.480) and offline political participation (M= 12.47, SD= 4.500, SE= 0.384).

The participants from the province of Sindh have the highest level of online political participation (Mean=17.33) and the participants from the province of Balochistan have the lowest level of online political participation (Mean=15.49). Similarly, as far as offline political participation is concerned, the participants from the province of Sindh have the highest level of online political participation (Mean=14.97) and the participants from the province of Balochistan have the lowest level of online political participation (Mean=12.47). Generally, the level of offline political participation in the participants of all provinces is less as compared to their online political participation.

Bootstrapping is also calculated on 1000 number of samples (95% confidence interval) of the same data for accuracy measures to avoid biases. It ensures 95% confidence interval that the population means fall within the range. i.e. for online political participation of the participants of Punjab (15.88-17.69), Sindh (16.59-18.15), Khyber Pakhtunkha (15.84-17.83), and of the participants of Balochistan (14.80-16.77). However, bootstrapping mean in case of offline political participation of the participants of Punjab (13.70-14.68), Sindh (13.83-15.49), Khyber Pakhtunkha (13.41-14.96) and of the participants of Balochistan (12.05-13.71) was noted.

Table 8.13 presents paired sample difference in online political participation and offline political participation of the participants of Punjab, the participants of Sindh, the participants of Khyber Pakhtunkha, and the participants of Balochistan. This mean difference in online and offline political participation in the participants of Punjab (2.580), bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa), 95% confidence interval CI (1.769-3.215) was significant t (299) = 11.624, p =.001.

Table 8.13 Paired Samples Test with Bootstrap statistics: Provinces wise comparison of Online and Offline Political Participation

Province	Mean Difference	SD	SE Mean	Bootstrap[a]- BCa95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Punjab Online PP – Offline PP	2.580	4.644	.266	1.769	3.215	11.624	299	.000
Sindh Online PP – Offline PP	2.360	4.619	.340	1.701	3.105	9.264	149	.000
Khyber Pakhtunkha Online PP – Offline PP	2.690	5.065	.414	1.894	3.440	6.416	149	.000
Balochistan Online PP – Offline PP	3.02	5.014	.409	2.513	3.826	7.850	149	.000

a.   Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples. 95% Confidence Interval
SD= Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error, N=750

Similarly, mean difference in online and offline political participation in the participants of Sindh (2.360), bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa), 95% confidence interval CI (1.701-3.105) was significant t (149) = 9.264, p =.001. The mean difference in online and offline political participation in the participants of Khyber Pakhtunkha (2.690), bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa), 95% confidence interval CI (1.894-3.440) was significant t (149) = 6.416, p =.001. Mean difference in online and offline political participation in the participants of Balochistan (3.02), bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa), 95% confidence interval CI (2.513-3.826) was significant t (149) = 7.850, p =.001.

The data shows a significant difference in online political participation and offline political participation in reference to the province. The difference in online political participation and offline political participation of the respondents from the province of Punjab (Mean

difference= 2.580, p < 0.001), the participation difference of the respondents from the province of Sindh (Mean difference= 2.360, p < 0.001), the participation difference of the respondents from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkha (Mean difference= 2.690, p < 0.001) and the participation difference of the respondents from the province of Balochistan (Mean difference= 3.02, p < 0.001),

Mean scores indicated that the participants from the province of Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkha exhibit very little difference (2.580, 2.360, 2.690 respectively) between the level of their online political participation and offline political participation. Moreover, the results also revealed that the participants from the province of Balochistan have a very significant and higher level of mean difference in the level of online and offline political participation.

8.6.4 Discussion

In this chapter, I concentrated on how political expression through social media affects offline political participation in university students in Pakistan. This study examines the relationship between university students' political use of social media and the level of their offline political participation. The formulated hypothesis was "Political expression on social media is associated with offline political participation of university students in Pakistan". Further detailed analysis aimed at measuring the role of intervening variables, such as gender, age, study level, study discipline, family income, and province. Descriptive statistics helped to evaluate major trends in youth's offline political participation, the level of their participation in different types of offline political activities, and demographic differences in the indicators which collectively determine offline political participation. Furthermore, according to the purpose and nature of the study, which was mainly to determine the association between social media political expression and offline political participation in university students and to test the hypothesis, inferential statistics were used.

Though political participation is a world-wide phenomenon, however, it is important to define and measure this variable particularly in the context of the political setup of Pakistan. Depending upon the cultural values of the society, social circumstances, and political environment of the country, I selected some of these activities for the analysis which is most relevant in terms of socio-political environment of Pakistan. While building the conceptual

framework of offline political participation in this chapter, I explored the construct of offline political participation and its related concepts with a composite set of offline political activities such as offline appeal to vote, attending political meetings, putting campaign stickers and flags of the party anywhere, putting on campaign shirts or caps of political parties and offline political discussions such as in classrooms (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Hirzalla et al., 2011; Theocharis & Lowe, 2016; Uhlaner, 2015; Valenzuela et al., 2012; Willnat et al., 2013; Verba et al., 1995). However, researchers approach the conceptualization of online political participation, somehow, in different ways depending upon one's immediate research interests, and not all political participation activities are chosen by all researchers.

The students were asked about their participation in above mentioned offline activities on the basis of time frames i.e. never, rarely, sometimes, often, or always. I was more interested in analyzing the causes of variations in political participation among different students by investigating multiple items of offline participation. Additionally, I was also interested to investigate the participation levels among different students and patterns of using different offline political activities. Because it was hypothesized that each of these participation activities contributes to some extent or to a larger extent in the cumulative formulation of offline political participation. This chapter attempts to investigate and disentangle all these concepts which have been conceptualized and operationalized in the above mentioned different dimensions.

The results from hypothesis testing revealed that there is a direct, positive, and significant association between social media political expression and offline political participation of the university students in Pakistan. The overall model suggests a medium correlation among social media political expression and offline political participation as a cumulative index of all offline political activities (42.2% variance explained). Second model of social media political expression including other explanatory variables; such as age, gender, study discipline, study level, province, and family income, also has high significance explaining (41.5%) of variance, and has correlation ($\beta = .618$) with offline political participation.

In all models of offline political participation i.e. social media political expression as a predictor with or without control variables, the political use of social media (political expression) has a positive and significant relationship with offline political participation. Many other studies which are based on cross-sectional data reinforce that more political expression on social media

motivates to take part in real-life political activities (Althoff et al., 2017; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Skoric & Zhu, 2016; Tang & Lee, 2013; Valenzuela et al., 2012).

Additionally gender-wise, study discipline wise and province wise split models of offline political participation were also analyzed without controlling other demographic variables. These considerations proved very substantial for the analysis of the study. Analyzing gender differences in the prediction of offline political participation, the study revealed significant differences in offline political participation of male and female students as a result of social media political expression i.e male students are more likely to engage in offline political activities as compared to female respondents. Although, there has been found a positive association in the level of offline political participation of both males and females with the political use of social media, but female students comparatively less participated in offline activities, which is also supported by the previous literature (Zaheer, 2016).

However, I noticed that the difference in the level of participation, individually, in all offline political activities was much higher among male students than female students. For example, the male students appeared much more engaged in attending political meetings, wearing campaign shirts or caps of political parties, putting campaign stickers and flags of political parties anywhere, However, the difference in participation of male and female students was not high in appealing to vote for any political party as female students also participated actively in this activity. Findings also revealed that male and female participation difference in the engagement of real-life discussions, such as in the classroom with friends, was not high. Moreover, male students appeared to be less actively involved in offline discussions as compared to other offline activities.

In the same manner, the study discipline wise split model was also analyzed and potentially significant differences were noted. The study discipline wise split model revealed that social science students exhibited a higher level of offline political participation as an outcome of social media political expression as compared to physical science students. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that some other significant differences are also observed in social science and physical science students in terms of their participation in different offline political activities. Social science students appeared more active in attending political meetings and processions of political candidates and political parties and wearing shirts and caps of political parties. Physical science students showed more participation in putting flags and stickers of political parties and

inviting others to vote for any political party, but their participation was even a bit less than social science students.

Province wise split model explored very minor differences in the level of offline political participation among the students of the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkha. However, the students from the province of Balochistan exhibited the lowest level of offline political participation. The students from the province of Sindh were more active in real-life political activities as a result of their social media political expression than the students from other provinces. However, as such, no inferences could be drawn from the study finding, regarding the difference of participation level in specific political activities in reference to provinces.

The analysis of individual real-life political activities suggests that there is a medium level trend of participation, some activities were very frequently practiced and some on average. Regardless of the demographic differences, the most practiced activity was to discuss the political issues in real-life settings such as classroom, college, university, or in other group gatherings. One of the traits of group discussions is that not even all group members are speaking on the issue, still, considerably all group members are the participants. Resultantly, every member is considered as a participant in the discussions. Nevertheless, participation in political discussions is an obvious first step in youngsters' political participation. However, in the previous chapter, the study has also revealed that political discussions proved a very important indicator of political awareness i.e. getting political orientation (Khalifa, 2011).

In general, students appeared less interested in attending political meetings among all real-life political activities, without demographics differences. This trend of participation was found in male and female students, students from all provinces, and from all study disciplines. There were very few students who never appealed to vote for a political party, more than 90% of students made offline appeals to vote for a political party regardless of its frequency. This offline political activity is very substantial as far as democratic political norms are concerned. Democratic political norms can not prevail in a country unless there is a vast majority of people who present their opinion regarding the selection of political candidates. The data from national election 2013 and election 2018 held in Pakistan also support these findings as a gradual increase in electorates especially young electorates can be observed.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

The main research question of the study is *"Is the intensity of political use of social media among university students in Pakistan associated with the political mobilization of the university students in Pakistan?"* To answer this research question, this study is designed focusing on the conceptual framework of Dahl's (1989) *Theory of Democratic Process* from his book 'Democracy and its Critics', along with Habermas's (1962, 1989) work of Public Sphere. This question is answered by exploring the relationship of political awareness of the university students, the change in traditional voting behavior of the students, online political participation, and offline political participation of the university students with student's political expression on social media. Among all social media, the use of Facebook and Twitter are taken for investigations in this study. The quantitative research methodology is adopted to test theoretical propositions. Data is collected through a survey with mixed-method sampling techniques (cluster and simple random sampling). The university students of all four provinces are sampled to investigate the phenomenon. Data is analyzed and interpreted by computing multiple statistical tests on SPSS. The findings can be generalized to the university students of all four provinces of Pakistan.

Although, the relationship between political use of social media and political mobilization of students has been studied extensively throughout the world, but the topic has not been studied extensively and deeply in the context of Pakistan. The study is articulated to investigate how the political use of social media has been made to foster different types of political gains. Ample support from previous literature is provided which established that political expression on social media helps in enhancing political efficacy both in online and offline spaces of students. Generally, these findings also confirmed that the political use of social media enhances political efficacy of students in four different areas (i) political awareness, (ii) changing traditional voting behavior (iii) online political participation, and (iv) offline political participation. I found very few studies on the topic covering the relationship between social media political expression with the above mentioned all four dimensions. Moreover, this study has put a step forward in analyzing all these dimensions in the context of the demographic variances. In terms of forms of expressions and activities, the data emphasize the multiple modes through which young people express themselves and get engaged politically. Primary results of

the study were comprised of the prerequisites of political mobilization such as demographic characteristics of the university students like age, gender, study level, study discipline, family income and province, and the antecedents of political mobilization such as general social media use, political use of social media, time spent on social media, and political partisanship. The university students are found to be very active users of social media in terms of frequency of use and density of use. They also appeared very enthusiastic in using social media for political reasons not only during elections but in routine too. Political reasons for using social media were among other top uses of social media.

As the results of all models show, using social media politically increases the likelihood of the university students' mobilization through all four areas of political efficacy. Further, it is found that the political expression on social media does not possess a strong association with all modules of political mobilization. Through study findings, however, I found compelling evidence of the potential role of social media political expression in encouraging youngsters for political mobilization. Social media political expression leads to an increased likelihood of becoming a social media user as an active member of the political process.

In addition to this, the results show that, generally, there is a lack of participation in offline political activities as compared to online political activities. Moreover, the difference in participation is found among male and female students as well. The difference in the level of participation in some online political activities was much higher among male students than female students whereas in some activities the participation level was almost the same. The socio-political environment of Pakistan is biased towards gender; women have very few opportunities to participate in real-life political activities. Since their childhood, they get fewer opportunities to become politically oriented and their poor orientation with politics poses a barrier in their participation in political activities. With the use of social media platforms, they have got the opportunity to participate in political activities without their physical appearance and being within the cultural norms. However, with the passage of time, I expect that these cultural barriers in their offline political participation will also subside to an extent.

In this research, the findings established that the students' political expression on social media is more likely to enhance their level of political awareness. The political use of social media is empowering the capacity of youth by increasing the level of their political awareness.

Political awareness was explored in multiple dimensions i.e. political information and knowledge, political interest, and political discussions.

About gaining political information and knowledge through political use of social media, not only that the students appear to rely on social media platforms to seek political information and knowledge, but they also value the social media information as trustworthy and if needed, turn to other information sources to check the reliability. Moreover, most of the students access information about politics, political candidates, and political parties through social media platforms such as facebook pages, facebook accounts of political parties and candidates, twitter accounts of political candidates, and political parties. The findings also suggest that social media has been successful in providing information about the pros and cons of political parties, political candidates, and, somehow, the information about candidates' constituencies. However, the students did not confirm to get information about the process of elections and vote casting.

Students appear to have a fairly noticeable interest in politics. However, findings also confirm that male students showed more interest in politics as compared to female students. Nevertheless, these online spaces offer many opportunities to create interest in those who have marginal or no interest in politics. Political interest has been proved a very substantial constituent factor of political awareness. The students having more political expression on social media were likely to have more political awareness, potentially, because of more political interest.

Taking part in political discussions has a significant influence on the political awareness of the university students, through engagement in free political debates and discussions within their friends' network. The students learned about politics and political issues through these confrontations. The broader friends' network eventually makes a broader forum of discussion, increasing the opportunities for multi-dimensional views. By concluding the findings on political awareness, the university students who have more political expression on social media are likely to have more political awareness. Side by side, I expand my findings that political expression on social media platforms such as facebook and twitter has the potential to overcome youngster's fear of speaking boldly on political issues on social media and this social media practice also prepares them to speak on offline spaces too and face the consequences confidently. Nevertheless, the political expression on social media bears some limitations too

1- Users of social media, somehow, reach to their like-minded people on their friends' list and eventually make a forum where like-minded people come together and share the like-

minded opinions. However, the chance of being accidentally exposed to random information, that does not come from like-minded sources, cannot be ignored. Barnidge et al., (2018) argue that, however, its impact is not that high as of direct exposure, but it influences political learning.

2- Social media structure allows patterns of selectivity about what information to select and what information is to quickly skip.

3- Reliability of the information is another concern which youngsters raised. The information communicated through social media about one's favorite political party and opposing political party is not always true, unbiased, and trustworthy. However, most of the youngsters appear to be very vigilant and keep on checking the information reliability from different sources.

4- Social media content, generally, and political content, specifically does not face any check and balance on unethical political discourse. It is very common to receive and share attack messages having abusive text and distorted faces. No formal regulations or monitoring are found to encounter such issues.

Political awareness is a very interesting interplay of political information and knowledge, political interest, and political discussions. In certain situations, having a political interest may encourage students to take part in political discussions, or political discussions may help in creating political interest in youngsters. Similarly, one's interest in politics is likely to encourage the urge to seek political information and knowledge. Some, on the other hand, on the basis of received information and knowledge, may engage in political discussions through online and offline spheres.

According to Dahl (1989), the 'elections and voting' is another substantial part of a democratic process, which, ensures the political representatives to be democratically elected. He presented the idea of voting equality for all adults. However, I focused on voting as a democratic norm, specifically, in the social, cultural, and political context of Pakistan. Based on previous literature, I figured out many traditional and non-democratic trends in the voting process in Pakistan i.e. voting on the bases of social factors such as family and peer pressures, caste and biradri (zat) pressures, etc. (Bond et al., 2012; Gerber et al., 2008; Nickerson, 2007; Sinclair et al., 2013; Usman et al., 2017). In reference to Pakistan, joint family systems and closed family structures are some of the top social factors which are responsible for the initial social and

political upbringing of an individual. Young people are socially bound to accept the norms of family and obey their elders. However, casting a vote following the directions of the family has been an important traditional voting trend in Pakistan. Its influence could be seen more in urban areas because non-urban areas have been influenced by many other social and political pressures.

True democratic norms can not prevail unless these traditional voting behaviors are changed. Keeping in mind, I hypothesized that, the political expression on social media is associated with the change in traditional voting behaviors. The findings reveal that the students more likely to encounter one or all of these traditional voting behaviors in their lives. Moreover, many of them confirm to argue against these social pressures and cast their votes keeping in mind the goodwill of the country. The university students so tend to motivate others in their friend's circle to cast their vote. Hence, it justifies the notion of Dahl (1989) that the power that electorates hold is their ability to participate in the democratic process to express their opinion and influence the decision-making process in the country. One's political orientation is an important indicator that demonstrates a willingness to participate in the decision-making process of the country. In the context of Pakistan, the study shows that social media is making up for the lacking of the political orientation of university students. Pakistan has been facing very low turnout in past elections because of the passive behaviors of the voters. However, the election data from the previous two elections, 2013 and 2018 shows a rift in election turnout which correlates with the findings of the study.

Dahl (1989) emphasizes in his book 'Democracy and its Critics' the effective participation of people in the political process. Though, Dahl presents an ideal form of democracy but side by side he also believes that the theoretical form of democracy is not easy to be implemented or can not be fully implemented. However, the opportunities for participation in the political process should be open to all, to influence the decision-making process in the country. To test this theoretical composition in reference to social media use, I divided political participation into two participatory spheres i.e online political participation and offline political participation.

This hypothesis was designed to explore the association between social media political expression and online political participation among university students in Pakistan. In light of this hypothesis, different modes of online political participation were explored individually i.e. online appeal for donating money for a political party or candidate, online appeal to vote, posting

and sharing slogans on social media, posting text, pictures, and videos related to political parties or candidates. By testing the hypothesis, a positive, strong, and significant association between social media political expression and online political participation was found. Moreover, the students confirmed to participate in one or all of these online political activities designed to investigate the level of their online political participation.

Generally, the study illustrated that social media has provided a platform for youngsters to ensure their participation in all online political activities. Nevertheless, the contribution of certain modes of online political activities was more and of certain was less, which justifies Habermas's (1964) notion of the free and liberal public sphere. I proceed with the synthesis that the social media proved as a broader public sphere where everyone may have the chance of equal participation according to his own suitability and choice of participation and ultimately enhancing its effects on political participation.

The contribution of the online political activity 'online appeal for donating money for a political party or candidate' was not high in defining online political participation. The majority of the students never made an appeal for donating money. As a mainstream political activity, usually, the political parties initiate appeals of donations for political campaigns. However, in the particular scenario of Pakistan, the donation appeals are not initiated by most of the mainstream political parties. In the previous election, only PTI initiated donation appeal for their campaigns.

Nevertheless, social media is characterized by speedy information delivery; the information multiples as the number of friends increases on the network. The university students confirmed that they very often share the information they receive from their friends through social media with other friends on the network.

Participation in real-life political activities is an important part of the political communication process which ensures the prevalence of democratic norms in the country. Public engagement in real-life political activities is vital for the national political process. The democratic role of youth for strengthening political structure is very important especially for struggling democracies like Pakistan. Pakistan has been facing lots of ups and downs in the political set up for strengthening democracy after 1988 (the worst ever non-democratic regime ended). From 1988 till 2002 no political party enjoyed its complete term of the political mandate. This phenomenon was explored by investigating the relationship between university student's political use of social media and the level of their offline political participation. The analysis of

real-life political activities suggests that there is a mixed trend of participation, some activities are very actively practiced, whereas, some are on average. However, the study also highlighted the activities which are less practiced due to either limited interest of the students or due to some other social, cultural, or economic reasons.

The students participated in one or all of these political activities designed to investigate the level of their political participation. In Pakistan, during the election campaigns or other political events that are organized by politicians from the national or provincial constituencies or political workers, the university students corroborated that they attended these political meetings often. As illustrated above, in terms of participation in political activities during elections in Pakistan, political activists, political workers, and their supporters wear political party-specific dresses like T-shirts, women shirts, and caps, with party symbols, slogans, and logos printed on them. These dresses used to be very easily available in the markets at cheap prices during election days. Similarly, putting party stickers or badges, showing affiliation with the political parties, is also very common. Findings also supported these participatory behaviors in reference to the political participation of the university student. They have been found very enthusiastic for participation in all the above mentioned political activities. However, very few students appealed in offline settings for donations for the campaigns of political parties or candidates.

However, I conclude that university youngsters are making potential use of all online and offline spheres for participation in political activities. They confirmed extensive sharing, commenting, posting, and showing dissent on political issues through social media platforms. Moreover, these spheres have provided a platform for the university youngsters to freely express themselves politically; comment, and share their political opinions without social and political pressures, hence approving social media as a forum of free speech according to the concept of Habermas's public sphere.

Enhancing the findings, the study also revealed a correlation between the political activities that are partaken on social media platforms and the political activities that are partaken in real-life settings. This points out that the political use of social media not only influences online political activities but it also influences real-life political activities, however, as a result of social media political expression, the level of engagement in online political activities was more than the engagement in offline political activities among the university students.

Many studies have overstated the effects of social media having sudden and immediate outcomes. It is very early to make an assessment of the magic role of social media in people's lives to initiate democratic reform in the country. The population of Pakistan majorly consists of young people. Most of the young people are using social media and celebrating their freedom of speech. It is expected that social media will continue to play a growing role in politics for strengthening democracy in Pakistan. The political environment of the country is constantly changing for the last 18 years because of the smooth transition of political regimes, democratic transfer of power, and the democratic political process. It is reasonable to expect a different kind of relationship between social media use and political activism. It may be far-reaching but not out of reach. The studies from different political structures have regarded social media as a force against oppression and barriers to free speech.

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Appendix A. Survey Cover Letter for Students

Dear Participant,

Good Day!

I am a Ph.D. research fellow in the Institut für Medienwissenschaft, Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany. This survey is being conducted as a part of the study for the fulfillment of Doctor of Philosophy on "Rising Wave of Social Media: A Perspective of Political Awareness, Voting Behavior, Online and Offline Political Participation of University Students in Pakistan"

I am inviting you to participate in this study. It will not take more than 25 minutes to fill this questionnaire. Your vigilant responses are highly valuable for the validity of this study. This study is about political communication and some parts of this questionnaire are about your previous political discussions on Facebook and Twitter. For the answers to such questions, you may need to review your previous log of facebook and twitter discussions.

Your personal data and the responses to this questionnaire shall be highly confidential and shall not be used for any other purpose. As a scientist, I take complete responsibility for your data.

If you find any thing inappropriate, you can write to me (anonymously, if you prefer) at fakhta.zeib@staff.uni-marburg.de or zeib@staff.uni-marburg.de. I will be glad for your further queries regarding this survey.

Thank You

Fakhta Zeib
Marburg, Germany

Supervised By: Prof.Dr. Angela Krewani

Appendix B. Questionnaire

Directions for questionnaire

Please check (✓) on the answer of your choice and based upon what you actually do by carefully viewing given options.

Respondents' demographics

Your age:---------- (years)   Gender: Male/ Female   Department:-------------------
Educational level:---------------   Province:----------------------

Monthly Family Income (Rupee)	10,000-29,000	30,000-49,000	50,000-69,000	70,000-89,000	90,000 or more

1-Intensity of the Social Media Use
Overall Social Media Use

1	Which social media site(s) do you use	Facebook	Twitter	Youtube	Google	Linkedin
2	How much time do you spend on social media in a day.	Less than 30 min	31-59 min	1-2 hours	3-4 hours	More
3	Social media use is part of my daily routine activities	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
4	What are your major interests for using social media	Entertainment Chatting Social relations Information Politics Sharing your routine activities				

General use of Facebook

5	How many friends are in your facebook friends' list	1- 50	51-100	101-150	150-200	More than 200
6	How many university students are in your facebook list	10-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	more than 80
7	You use your facebook account	Two days a week	Three days a week	four days a week	Five days a week	Daily
8	How much time (average) do you spend on facebook in a day	None	less than 59 min	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	More

General use of Twitter (If you are Twitter user)

9	How many followers you have on twitter	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	More
10	You use twitter accounts	Two days a week	Three days a week	four days a week	Five days a week	Daily
11	How much time (average) do you spend on twitter in a day	None	less than 59 min	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	More

2- Intensity of the Political use of Social Media

12	How many posts (average) in a week you receive containing any topic	None	1-15	16-30	31-50	more
13	Official Facebook pages of which political party are added in your facebook account	PML-N	PTI	PPP	PML-Q	Others
14	How many political groups or pages have you joined on facebook	None	1-2	3-4	5-6	More
15	Which official accounts of political parties do you follow on twitter in routine	PML-N	PTI	PPP	PML-Q	Others
16	How many political characters do you follow on twitter	None	1-2	3-4	5-6	More
17	Which political leaders' twitter account do you follow?	▪ Imran Khan ▪ Bilawal Bhutto ▪ Maryam Nawaz ▪ Shujaat Hussain ▪ Asad Umer ▪ asifa Bhutto				

3- About Political use of Social Media

18	Have you made any facebook page for political purpose	Yes		No		Neutral
19	Which activity(s) do you perform usually on your received posts about favorite political party	Like	share	comment	All	
20	Which activity do you perform usually on your received posts about opposing political party	Like	share	comment	All	
21	How many political tweets (average) in a week you share with your followers.	None	1-15	16-30	31-50	more
22	How many political posts (average) in a week you posted or shared on facebook	None	1-15	16-30	31-50	more
23	Your interest in information about politics, election and government	not at All	slightly interested	some how interested	very interested	Extremely interested

		Never	**Rarely**	**Some times**	**Often**	**Always**
24	You receive posts about any political party or candidate					
25	You comment on your friends' political posts					
26	you comment on others' tweets					
27	You 'like' your friends' post related to opposing political party					
28	You shared your friends' post related to positive impression about opposing political party with your other friends					
29	You shared your friends' post related to negative impression about your favorite political party with your other friends					

4- Voting Behavior

30	Did you register your vote for elections	Yes	No	Neutral
31	Did you cast your vote in election	Yes	No	Neutral
32	Do you aim to cast your vote in next elections	Yes	No	Neutral

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
33	You intend to cast your vote on the directions of your family members					
34	You argued with your family members to vote for certain political party					
35	You encouraged your friends to cast their vote					
36	You registered your vote just because you were eligible for casting vote					
37	You cast your vote because you thought your vote can bring a good change in country					
38	You prefer casting your vote on the bases of Caste/ Biradri					

5- Political Participation

Political Participation is composed of two parts (i) Online political Participation (ii) Offline political Participation. In online political Participation, those political activities are mentioned which you perform online (Social Media) and in Offline Political Participation those political activities are mentioned which you perform offline(Real-life setting)

Online Political Participation		Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always
39	You invited your online friends for political meetings					
40	You posted texts, pictures or videos of any political party					
41	You invited your online friends to attend any political leader's procession					
42	You made online appeal to others to vote for any political party or leader					
43	You made appeal to others to canvass for any political party or leader through social media					
44	You posted or shared political slogans through social media					

45	You made online appeal for donations for any political party					
46	Participated in online political discussions and chats					
47	You follow political leaders' tweets					
48	You re-tweet political leader's tweets					
49	You re-tweet your friends' political tweets					

Offline Political Participation

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
50	You made offline appeal to others to vote for any political party or leader					
51	You encouraged others to canvass for any political party or leader					
52	You used to discuss political topics in your class room, college or university					
53	You put campaign stickers or flags of your favorite political party anywhere					
54	You bought or put on campaign shirts or caps of your favorite political party					
55	You attended political meetings on your online friend's invitation					
		Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
56	Social media have proved effective in appealing money for campaign					
57	Social media discussions have proved effective in changing views on political issues					
58	Social media have proved effective in signing up as volunteer worker for political party					

6-Political Party Affiliation (Political Partisanship)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
59	You had any party affiliation before election					
60	You have strong party affiliation with PML-N					
61	You have strong party affiliation with PTI					
62	You have strong party affiliation with PPP					

63	You have strong party affiliation with Others Please mention ----------------					
64	You have certain political party affiliation because your parents have suggested so					
65	you 'like' your friends' postings even if you don't agree on it					
66	you share your friends' postings even if you don't agree on it					
67	you comment fairly on your friends postings					

Awareness about Politics

68	You get information about 'the constituency a candidate belongs to' through social media					
69	You get information about the corruption scandals of electoral candidates through social media					
70	You came to know about the corruption scandals of leaders of the political parties through social media					
71	You came to know about the corruption scandals of the political parties through Social Media					
72	You get to know positive things about the performance of political party through social media					
73	Generally you got some new information about your favorite political party through social media					
74	Generally you got some new information about your opposing political party through social media					
75	Political content shared on social media is true, fair					
76	Political content shared on social media is unbiased					
77	Political content shared on social media is exaggerated					
		Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always
78	You check the reliability of the posts related to your favorite political party					
79	How often do you check the reliability of the posts related to your opposing political party					

80	What motivated you to share posts of your favorite political leader or party	- Sharing of such posts doesn't mean anything - To show your party affiliation - To show that particular pol. party or leader is good for country - To encourage others to favor that political party - To encourage others to vote for that party
81	Current Prime Minister of the country	
82	Chief Minister of your province	
83	In your point of view, what was the most important political issue of 2019 which concerned national public opinion on Social media?	

What do you specifically think about the Political role of Social Networking Sites in youngsters' political participation?

Respondent's Signature: --------------------------------

Zusammenfassung in deutscher Sprache

In dieser sich schnell verändernden, technologisch fortschreitenden und global vernetzten Welt waren die Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten für die junge Generation, die jetzt vorhanden sind, noch nie so groß wie heute. Internet und Kommunikationstechnologien haben nicht nur die Anzahl der Aktivitäten der Jugend erweitert, sondern auch die Anzahl der Möglichkeiten, wie diese Aktivitäten ausgeführt werden. Auch die Jugend Pakistans wird durch die jüngst aufkommende Welle der sozialen Medien beeinflusst. Social-Media-Plattformen bieten ihren Nutzer*innen viele verschiedene und innovative Möglichkeiten, sich auszudrücken. Ob es sich um passiven Online-Ausdruck handelt, wie das beiläufige Liken und Teilen von Social-Media-Inhalten, oder um aktiven Online-Ausdruck, wie das Kommentieren, Diskutieren, Einmischen in politische Online-Kontroversen, Bewerten, Lesen und Weiterleiten von Blogs – beide fördern verschiedene Ebenen und Formen des bürgerlichen und politischen Engagements (Gil De Zúñiga et al., 2009; C. Vaccari et al., 2015). Darüber hinaus haben alle politischen Parteien auf nationaler Ebene in Pakistan auch Social-Media-Accounts und Social-Media-Teams. Politische Parteien und Persönlichkeiten nutzen soziale Medien für politische Kampagnen und um Zugang zu jungen Wähler*innen zu erhalten, insbesondere zu denen, die sich zuvor von der Politik abgewendet haben (Tasenţe & Nicoleta, 2013). Soziale Medien sind heute eine immer beliebtere Plattform, um nachhaltige Veränderungen im politischen Umfeld eines jeden Landes herbeizuführen, sei es bei der Mobilisierung von politischem Protest in Spanien durch soziale Netzwerke (Anduiza et al., 2014) oder im Fall der Bewegusng des Arabischen Frühlings (Breuer, 2012; Breuer et al., 2015).

Vorliegende Studie untersucht das Phänomen der politischen Kommunikation auf Facebook und Twitter und ihre Auswirkungen auf die politische Mobilisierung von Jugendlichen im Kontext der politischen und sozialen Verhältnisse in Pakistan. Die auf verschiedenen Websites gesammelten Daten, die Umfragen zu Nutzer*innen sozialer Medien und zu den Wahltrends der Wähler*innen und ihrer politischen Beteiligung enthalten, liefern einige Anhaltspunkte zu diesen Phänomenen und eine solide Grundlage, um diese Forschung anzugehen und die theoretischen Thesen zu testen. Diese Thesen werden hauptsächlich mit Hilfe von Habermas' (1969) Konzept der Öffentlichkeit und Dahls (1989) Theorie der Demokratie untersucht. Die Studie erforscht den Zusammenhang zwischen der politischen Nutzung von

Facebook und Twitter durch Jugendliche und ihrer politischen Mobilisierung. Dabei werden drei wesentliche Elemente von Dahls Demokratietheorie als Parameter politischer Mobilisierung in den Blick genommen, nämlich ein aufgeklärtes Verständnis von Politik, Gleichheit beim Wählen und eine gleichberechtigte und effektive Beteiligung aller Bürger*innen am politischen Prozess.

Die Daten wurden mittels einer quantitativen Forschungsmethode erhoben, indem Umfragen unter 750 männlichen und weiblichen Universitätsstudierenden der Altersgruppe 18-25 Jahre aus allen vier Provinzen Pakistans durchgeführt wurden. Alle Modelle der politischen Mobilisierung wurden mit Hilfe einer multiplen Regressionsanalyse getestet. Die Ergebnisse, die in den jeweiligen Kapiteln der Dissertation vorgestellt werden, zeigen die Unterschiede zwischen den Studierenden aller vier Provinzen Pakistans auf der Grundlage ihrer Nutzungsmuster sozialer Medien, die Unterschiede in ihrem politischen Bewusstsein, die Unterschiede in ihrem Wahlverhalten und die Unterschiede in ihrer politischen Online- und Offline-Beteiligung.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass politische Äußerungen in sozialen Medien einen positiven und signifikanten Zusammenhang mit dem Bewusstseinsniveau der Studierenden haben, indem sie das Interesse der Studierenden an Politik wecken, sie in politische Diskussionen einbinden und ihnen Informationen und Wissen zur Verfügung stellen. Weiter zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass politische Äußerungen in sozialen Medien einen positiven, aber mittleren Zusammenhang mit der Veränderung des traditionellen Wahlverhaltens haben. Der familiäre Druck wirkt sich stärker auf die Wahlentscheidung aus als der Einfluss von Kaste/Biradri und Freunden. Für die politische Online- und Offline-Beteiligung hat der politische Ausdruck in sozialen Medien eine positive und starke Assoziation mit politischen Online-Aktivitäten und einen geringen bis mittleren Zusammenhang mit politischen Offline-Aktivitäten. Der Einfluss der politischen Meinungsäußerung in sozialen Medien auf weibliche Studierende ist im Vergleich zu männlichen Studierenden relativ gering, da die weiblichen Studierenden ein niedriges Niveau der Beteiligung an politischen Offline-Aktivitäten (im realen Leben) aufweisen und sie den familiären Druck bei Wahlentscheidungen eher zu akzeptieren scheinen als männliche Studierende. Insgesamt hat sich der politische Ausdruck in sozialen Medien als ein sehr starker Prädiktor für politische Mobilisierung erwiesen und steht in einem mittleren bis hohen Zusammenhang mit allen Variablen.